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Why they hate us : disaggregating the Iraqi insurgency

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THESIS

WHY THEY HATE US:
DISAGGREGATING THE IRAQI INSURGENCY

by

Mark A. Steliga

March 2005

Thesis Advisor:	Anne Marie Baylouny
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The violent and diffuse nature of the Iraqi insurgency has become a major obstacle to reconstruction and the withdrawal of coalition military forces. The central problem with the coalition's counterinsurgency strategy is that it fails to take into account the diverse goals and historical motivations of the groups involved. A coalition counterinsurgency strategy flexible enough to deal with Iraq's insurgent groups differently as opposed to monolithically will be more effective in achieving stability in Iraq. This thesis argues that the Iraqi insurgency can be disaggregated into categories that will better assist policy makers in identifying and understanding insurgent groups. Sunni, Shi'ite, and transnational categories are used to divide insurgents, showing each to have specific traits. Categories of insurgents are further divided, where insurgent groups are examined in more detail. Based on the disaggregation, recommendations for counterinsurgency strategy orientations are proposed. America's long-term legacy in the Middle East will depend on the conditions of our departure from Iraq. It is only through a more thorough understanding of Iraq's insurgent groups and the proper application of a counterinsurgency strategy which accounts for the differences between groups that America will be able to make this legacy a positive one.

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WHY THEY HATE US: DISAGGREGATING THE IRAQI INSURGENCY

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The violent and diffuse nature of the Iraqi insurgency has become a major obstacle to reconstruction and the withdrawal of coalition military forces. The central problem with the coalition's counterinsurgency strategy is that it fails to take into account the diverse goals and historical motivations of the groups involved. A coalition counterinsurgency strategy flexible enough to deal with Iraq's insurgent groups differently as opposed to monolithically will be more effective in achieving long term stability in Iraq.

This thesis argues that the Iraqi insurgency can be disaggregated into categories that will better assist policy makers in identifying and understanding insurgent groups. Sunni, Shi'ite, and transnational categories are used to divide insurgents, showing each to have specific traits. Categories of insurgents are further divided, where insurgent groups are examined in more detail. Based on the disaggregation, recommendations for counterinsurgency strategy orientations are proposed.

America's long-term legacy in the Middle East will depend on the conditions of our departure from Iraq. It is only through a more thorough understanding of Iraq's insurgent groups and the proper application of a counterinsurgency strategy which accounts for the differences between groups that America will be able to make this legacy a positive one.

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I. OVERVIEW AND THE CURRENT STATE OF IRAQ'S INSURGENCY

With the fall of the Iraq's Ba'athist regime in April of 2003, came the rise of a complex insurgency and America's most significant military challenge since the Vietnam War. Since that time, coalition forces in Iraq have been faced with an ongoing and progressively more organized insurgency which has claimed over 1,300 American lives, over four times as many civilian lives, and has had an incalculable cost in economic loss, infrastructural damage, and military spending. On a daily basis, coalition forces are harassed by armed attacks, mortar fire, and improvised explosive devices (IED)s which have resulted in virtually constant casualties. Considering America's lack of accurate, tactical, human intelligence (HUMINT) in Iraq, coalition forces have been fighting an increasingly uphill battle against a multitude of well armed and determined insurgent groups. America's only apparent solution seems to be the expedited training of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), who have shown themselves to be relatively unreliable and thoroughly infiltrated by insurgents and collaborators.[1] Currently, as Iraq's fledgling government attempts to frame a new constitution, coalition and ISF continue to make little headway against this diverse and seemingly endless insurgency.

A wide variety of ethnic, sectarian, political, and economic motivations underpin the diverse insurgency in Iraq. It is my contention that one of the greatest policy errors in America's formulation of a counterinsurgency strategy was a failure to take into account this multitude of differences, and recognize many of the clear divisions between insurgent groups. It is in this respect that I address the question of: What typological breakdown of the Iraqi insurgency will best account for group differences and assist in the formulation of a more flexible and effective counterinsurgency strategy?

Chapter I of this thesis discusses the general nature of the Iraqi insurgency and introduces the specific typologies that I use to break down the Iraqi insurgency into categories. This is followed by an explanation of why it is necessary to disaggregate

[1] Col Jerry Durrant USMC, director 1st MarDiv Iraqi Security Forces training activities al-Anbar Province Iraq, speech, lecture given at Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, 24 January 2005.

Iraq's insurgent groups and the overall significance of this to U.S. policy in Iraq. Chapters II-IV examine each insurgent category and the subdivisions within the categories. This thesis concludes in chapter V with a set of brief policy oriented recommendations based on more detailed insight into Iraq's different insurgent groups.

A. THE GENERAL NATURE OF INSURGENCY AND SPECIFIC CHARACTERIZATION OF THE IRAQI RESISTANCE

The Central Intelligence Agency defines insurgency as:

> A protracted political-military activity directed toward completely or partially controlling the resources of a country through the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organizations. Insurgent activity—including guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and political mobilization, for example, propaganda, recruitment, front and covert party organization, and international activity—is designed to weaken government control and legitimacy while increasing insurgent control and legitimacy. The common denominator of most insurgent groups is their desire to control a particular area. This objective differentiates insurgent groups from purely terrorist organizations, whose objectives do not include the creation of an alternative government capable of controlling a given area or country.[2]

While the bulk of this characterization holds true with regard to the resistance in Iraq, the last sentence in this definition is problematic. Currently, there are clearly groups within Iraq fighting the coalition that do not have long-term plans for an alternative government. While many of these groups may be transnational, others may simply be locally-centered Sunni groups with only immediate goals and a limited vision for the future of Iraq. Regardless, all of Iraq's resistance groups are currently being labeled and perceived as part of Iraq's greater "insurgency problem". Due to this, I initially classify all of Iraq's anti-coalition resistance movements as insurgent groups for the purpose of my thesis, allowing for the "re-labeling" of the specific typological subdivisions once a more clear understanding of the players involved is established.

When considering the nature of the Iraqi resistance, the only two significant characteristics that insurgent groups share are fairly intuitive. All of Iraq's insurgent groups maintain an interest in expelling coalition forces, which are currently the only

2 Central Intelligence Agency, "Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency" (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, no date), 2.

major hurdles between the insurgents and their goals of power, wealth, prestige, or ideological victory. In addition, all of Iraq's insurgent groups have taken advantage of Iraq's cities, using them as refuges, making the insurgency a largely urban phenomenon. Based on the lack of cover provided by most of Iraq's geography and the proficiency of American military units and technology in this environment, the decision by insurgents to utilize the urban environment makes sense. Beyond these two factors, Iraq's different religious, national, tribal, and ideologically motivated groups give the insurgency a diverse flavor.

B. DISAGGREGATION OF THE IRAQI INSURGENCY INTO TYPOLOGIES

Because of the social and historical demographics of Iraq, I argue that it is necessary to understand the Iraqi insurgency as a variety of different concurrent movements as opposed to one monolithic phenomenon. I demonstrate this multiple nature of the Iraqi insurgency by examining three different social groups, their movements, and opposition activities. Given the strong sectarian affiliations within Iraq's population, religion is probably the single biggest divider among insurgent groups. Beyond this, we must look to group motivation in order to further disaggregate the insurgency. The Shi'ites, Sunnis, and transnationals are all characterized by differing social bases, motivations, and organizing strategies. Each of these three groups in turn holds numerous tendencies within. The breakdowns are aimed at not only giving a typological structure to the Iraqi insurgency, but at flushing out subdivisions within each category. In this respect, the categories of insurgents outlined in this thesis are intended to be functional, assigning specific attributes to each category and sub category of insurgents which will better assist U.S. policymakers in identifying the strengths, weaknesses, and divisions between insurgent groups.

1. The Shi'ites

Congregated in southern Iraq and a numerically majority to the Sunnis, the Shi'ites have been a historically repressed population. Since the fall of Saddam Hussein, underground political networks oriented toward communism and Islamic government that were subdued under the Ba'athists have once again begun to come into the public sector.

This, combined with the relationship between the Shi'ite *ulama* and its community, has established a unique base for a Shi'ite insurgency in Iraq. While the Mahdi Army has proven to be the Shi'ites only mainstream insurgent group, it was not widely embraced by Iraq's Shi'ite community. This chapter will examine the Mahdi Army, its origins, goals, ideological basis, and show it to be representative of only a small portion of the extremely diverse views found within Iraq's Shi'ite community.

2. The Sunnis

Concentrated in central Iraq, the Sunnis have been a ruling minority over Iraq's Shi'ites for centuries, reaping the social, political, and economic rewards of their positions. The spring of 2003 and the toppling of Saddam Hussein's government brought an end to this system and largely disenfranchised many of Iraq's traditional power structures. Many of these power structures had been revitalized by Saddam Hussein in the past few decades in an attempt by the former dictator to consolidate his power within Iraq. These traditional power structures take the shape of tribes in Iraq, and their significance, as well as their past relations with Saddam Hussein's regime are possibly the most misunderstood aspects of history with regard to the coalition's current policy in Iraq. For the purpose of this thesis, a tribe is defined as a collection of "affiliated clans (who) claim to have a common lineage or descent."[3] The clans that make up a tribe are further divided into sub-clans, which are eventually made up of extended family groupings, and finally single families.

The legacy of this reversal of fortune for the Sunnis has been the rise of a multi-faceted Sunni insurgency, which can be generally divided into Sunni tribal insurgent groups, Sunni former régime loyalists (FRLs), Sunni nationalists, and Sunni Islamists. While Sunni tribal groups are largely concerned with their regional power and prestige *vis-à-vis* neighboring tribes, FRLs are mainly motivated by a general desire to nationally reestablish the "Old Guard" in power, or at a minimum, prevent this power from falling into the hands of the Shi'ites. With the capture of many high-ranking Ba'athists, the FRLs have become operationally inactive, functioning largely as financiers of other

[3] Faleh A. Jabar, "Sheikhs and Ideologues: Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Tribes under Patrimonial Totalitarianism in Iraq, 1968-1998," in *Totaliarism and Tribalism: The Ba'th Regime and Tribes*, eds. Faleh Jabar and Hosham Dawod (London: Saqi, 2003), 75.

groups. Iraqi nationalists gained many of their numbers from FRL groups, and are motivated primarily by their desire to expel foreign forces to insure that Sunni Arabs retain the political authority in Iraq. Indigenous Iraqi, Sunni Arab Islamists are another sub-category, acting as a cohesive force between some insurgent groups, and allowing for cooperation between Sunni groups and transnational jihadists. For the purposes of this thesis, the "Sunni" categorization of the insurgency is used for Iraq's Sunni Arab population. While the majority of Iraq's Kurds are also Sunni, they will be dealt with separately in the "transnational" chapter. This chapter focuses on the unique social factors behind the Sunni insurgent groups, as well as the motivations and basis for tribal, FRL, nationalist, and Islamist insurgent groups.

3. The Transnationals

The collapse of the Ba'athist regime also created a tremendous power vacuum in Iraq which had once been filled by a repressive state security mechanism. The overnight disappearance of this form of authoritarian control allowed a multitude of independently motivated groups to pursue their own individual interests. In this way, the transnationalists are probably the most diverse typology of the Iraqi insurgency, incorporating a variety of different social, religious, ethnic, and economically motivated groups. Despite this, they all contain similarities, and for the purpose of this thesis I define transnational insurgents using two criteria; Those insurgents that have a greater interest in their specific group, organization, or political agenda, than in the future of the state of Iraq, and insurgent groups with "sustained continuous interactions with opponents – national or nonnational – by connected networks of challengers across national boundaries."[4] Based on these factors, I focus this chapter on Iraq's three largest transnational groups, specifically the Islamic Jihadists, Kurdish elements, and large, economically motivated criminal groups. For the purpose of my thesis I will differentiate between religiously motivated indigenous Iraqis and "jihadists". I will classify jihadists

4 Sidney Tarrow, "Power in Movement: Collective Action, Social Movements and Politics" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 184.

as transnational, ideologically motivated fighters that use religion as their justification for acts of violence "directed against people they believe are their enemies and the enemies of their way of life."[5]

C. THE NECESSITY FOR DISAGGREGATION

With the variety of differences between insurgent groups and their social bases, a thorough disaggregation of the insurgency is crucial to policy formation for the coalition authorities in Iraq. Lumping all insurgents together, with similar policies for all, has resulted in mistakes during the coalition's tenure and will likely compound future decisions with regard to a coalition counterinsurgency strategy.

Immediately following the collapse of the Ba'athist regime in the spring of 2003, the United States made a series of policy errors stemming from a general lack of understanding of the social groups from which Iraq's insurgent groups arose. In the south, American policymakers recognized the significance of Shi'ite power brokers such as Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani far too late. The result of this was a failure on the part of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) to open proper dialogue channels through which to pass information, show respect, and monitor the conditions for an insurgency. Due to this lack of cooperation, coalition authorities found themselves face to face with a large Shi'ite insurgency just over a year later. In the central provinces, America's complete disregard for Iraq's tribal structure and its political significance lead to the rise of multiple disjointed Sunni tribal insurgencies, intent on jockeying for power and adamant about not being disenfranchised by Iraq's new government.

Armed with a more detailed understanding of the driving factors behind each typology and its subsets, coalition policy makers will be able to avoid the pitfalls of past decisions, and create a more effective counterinsurgency strategy, flexible enough to target specific groups. Whereas some insurgent groups such as the Shi'ites or tribal Sunnis, have a stake in the future of Iraq, others, such as the jihadists do not. U.S. counterinsurgency strategy needs to be able to reconcile this with policy, more effectively

[5] Mary R. Habeck, "Jihadist Strategies in the War on Terrorism," in *Policy Research and Analysis* (Washington D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 8 November 2004), available from http://www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/hl855.cfm; Internet; accessed 5 March 2005.

directing political and financial resources toward our long-term partners in Iraq, and military pressure toward those who have no stake in the country's future.

D. STAKES AND SIGNIFICANCE

At this point, Iraq's insurgent groups have gained the strategic initiative, dictating the coalition's operational tempo through the use of asymmetrical tactics, which do not require an American withdrawal for victory, but merely their group's own survival.[6] The need for a new, more effective counterinsurgency strategy based on a better understanding of the insurgents has become imperative, and this directly related to the stakes involved. Whereas America had relatively little to loose in its hasty withdrawal from other recent guerilla movements, such as Somalia, far more is at risk in Iraq. With an estimated 115 billion barrels of known oil reserves, and 110 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, Iraq maintains the world's second largest cache of crude oil and one of the world's largest stores of natural gas.[7] Militarily, Iraq is extremely significant to the United States. Its geographical location not only makes it an ideal bulwark against the perceived threat of Iran, but Iraq also could provide the U.S. military with basing facilities to replace its slow but seemingly inevitable departure from Saudi Arabia. Beyond military and energy interests, the United States has also invested a great deal of financial, human, and political capital in Iraq, making a perceived loss in Iraq another blow to America's tattered international credibility, and social psyche. On an ideological level, the United States has a far deeper interest in seeing Iraq stabilize and prosper, as a revitalized Iraq would offer "an alternative to oppressive Islamic fundamentalist regimes and repressive authoritarian secular regimes."[8] America's failure to realize this goal

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6 James A. Russell, "Strategic Implications of the Iraq Insurgency", *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, vol. 8 (June 2004), 51.

7 Energy Information Administration, "Iraq Country Analysis Brief," (November 2004), available from http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/iraq.html; Internet; accessed 2 March 2005.

8 Andrew Krepinevich, "Iraq and Vietnam: Déjà vu All Over Again, Part II of II," in Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments: *Backgrounder* (8 July 2004), available from http://www.csbaonline.org/4Publications/Archive/B.20040702.IraqViet/B.20040702.IraqViet.pdf; Internet; accessed 2 March 2005.

would be a victory for militant Islamic fundamentalists, and a serious setback to the Bush Administration's declared mission to "promote democracy (as) a prelude to our enemies' defeat."[9]

[9] President George W. Bush, Second Inaugural Address, Transcript (20 January 2005), available from http://www.cnn.com/2005/ALLPOLITICS/01/20/bush.transcript/; Internet; accessed 2 March 2005.

II. THE SHI'ITES: OVERVIEW AND CURRENT STATUS

On 4 April, 2004, the United States and its coalition allies in Iraq were faced with a serious problem. For the first time, coalition forces had been engaged in armed confrontation by a Shi'ite insurgent group. The rise of a Shi'ite militia into armed combat with coalition units posed a major setback to provisional authorities and coalition military planners, as it not only signaled the dawn of a "two-front" insurgency within Iraq, but alluded to the fact that Iraq's previously quiet Shi'ites were losing patience with the coalition and Iraq's interim government. Even more worrisome was the fact that Shi'ite Muslims comprise the majority of Iraq's sectarian groups, and the sudden rise of a large Shi'ite insurgency could signal the appearance of a new enemy, far larger than coalition forces had been dealing with to date.

In comparison with other insurgent groups in Iraq, the Shi'ite insurgency is truly a distinctive phenomenon. Far more cohesive than its transnational and Sunni counterparts, the Shi'ite insurgency in Iraq has proven to be relatively singular in nature and generally willing to obey its clerical leadership. Led by the fiery young cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, the Mahdi Army became Iraq's Shi'ite insurgency, rallying thousands of armed young men into the streets of southern Iraqi cities and Baghdad's Shi'ite slums. For several months into the fall of 2004, American military forces endured multiple attacks and fought a series of battles against the Mahdi Army in what appeared to be a complete loss of control of southern Iraq. Finally on 26 August 2004, after a widely televised and heated battle through the streets of the holy Shi'ite city of Najaf, and with the return of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani from medical treatment in London, al-Sadr agreed to withdraw the Mahdi army from Najaf. In the weeks that followed, American "clean up operations" in the poor Shi'ite neighborhoods of Baghdad, as well as internal demands within Iraq's Shi'ite community, ostensibly pressured the Mahdi Army into a slow disarmament and conversion from militia to political movement.

While these events have seemingly eliminated the Mahdi Army as a military threat, the speed with which the Mahdi Army arose and the size of this insurgency warrants further study. Beyond this, Iraq's large Shi'ite population is a tremendous resource for insurgents, capable of providing a determined group with ample logistical

support for continuous operations. In addition, the Shi'ite insurgency within Iraq has deep roots, drawing on social characteristics of Iraq's Shi'ite communities that were tempered by decades of persecution. This history of repression has also given the Shi'ites a clear motivation, as the fall of Saddam's regime and hopes for democracy in Iraq have provided Iraqi Shi'ites with a long sought window of opportunity for majority political representation. The ideological dynamic of this insurgency also has deep roots, stretching back to the Iranian revolution in 1979 and the leadership of several Iraqi Shi'ite clerics influenced by the teachings of revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. These are all extremely important factors to consider when attempting to understand the origin and motivation of the Shi'ite insurgency, as well as the tactics and goals of this movement.

Despite the fact that the Mahdi Army seems to currently be closed down, this could change rapidly in the coming months if the Iraq's Shi'ite community and *ulama* feel that they have been cheated or left out of Iraq's new political process. In essence, the small taste of a Shi'ite insurgency serves as an important reminder of what the United States could face in the future. In this respect, a critical examination of this insurgency and its historical basis will greatly aid policymakers in not only understanding the cause and effect relationships of the past, but in avoiding similar mistakes in the future.

In this chapter, I focus on the Shi'ite insurgency in Iraq as unique, distinct from the Sunni and transnational insurgencies. I demonstrate the importance of the legacy of repression among the Shi'ites and their disenchantment with the United States through an examination of this community's recent history. I also provide an overview of the Mahdi Army and its leader, Muqtada al-Sadr, noting the specific characteristics of this insurgent group, as well as the ideological basis for the movement. Despite the apparent cohesiveness of Iraq's Shi'ite community, I show that the al-Sadr movement was far from monolithic, and widely unpopular within Iraq's diverse Shi'ite community. Divergent religious and political tendencies that were repressed under Saddam Hussein, have once again arisen. Different opinions among the Shi'ite clerical leadership are especially important, and had a role in ending the al-Sadr movement. Finally, I conclude by explaining the significance of the al-Sadr movement despite its current dormant status.

A. ORIGINS AND HISTORICAL INFLUENCES: A LEGACY OF REPRESSION

One of the most significant differences between the Shi'ite insurgency and other Iraqi insurgent groups, is that the Shi'ite insurgency arises from a social group which had been previously disenfranchised. Whereas many of the Sunni insurgent groups are fighting because they have lost power, the Shi'ite insurgency arose largely to insure that they get power in a system that has historically excluded and repressed them. While Sunni elites have ruled the territory that we now know as the state of Iraq for the better part of the last millennia, Iraq's Shi'ite community comprises the numerical majority of its population. Due to the minority Sunni rule in this region, no current accurate census results are available on the exact number of Shi'ites in Iraq. British census data from 1919 estimated the number of Shi'ites in Iraq as 53% of its population, and this number was adjusted in 1932 to reflect that Shi'ites accounted for 56% of the populace.[10] Recent estimates on the number of Shi'ites in Iraq are even higher, indicating that they account for between 60 and 65 % of Iraq's 24 million citizens.[11] Given Iraq's current population growth rate of 2.7 %, Iraq will have a population of over 31 million by 2010.[12] Future investment in southern Iraq and an end to the sanctions which have sapped this area of its service infrastructure will help in widening the gulf between the number of Sunnis and Iraq's majority Shi'ite population. Iraqi Sunnis are well aware of the growing Shi'ite population, and the threat that this poses to the possibility of Sunni rule, especially within any sort of democratic system of government.

The idea that the Shi'ites represent a threat to Iraq's Sunni power base is not a new realization. By the mid-1970s, Iraq's Ba'ath Party came to recognize the numerically dominant Shi'ites as their principle rival for power and legitimacy. Over the course of the past thirty years, this fear was managed through the institutionalization of Shi'ite repression under the Ba'athist regime. Using the Supreme Council for the Islamic

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[10] Yitzhak Nakash, "The Shi'is of Iraq," (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), 13.

[11] A. William Samii, "Shia Political Alternatives in Postwar Iraq," in *Middle East Policy Council Journal, Vol*. 10, No. 2 (Summer 2003), available from http://www.mepc.org/public_asp/journal_vol10/0306_samii.asp; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

[12] World Bank, *World Bank Data Sheet: Iraq* (29 January 2004), available from http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/mna/mena.nsf/Attachments/Datasheet/$File/iraqprototype.pdf; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) and *Al Dawwa al-Islamiya* Party (The Islamic Call), Shi'ite activists attempted establish a political voice in Iraq against the ruling Sunni elite. This opposition to the Ba'athists was ruthlessly crushed after rioting in 1974, and again in 1977, through a bloody purge of the Shi'ite *ulama* in Najaf. The Ba'athist regime executed five clerics in 1974 and eight in 1977. Although stripped of political power, the *Dawwa* party became the centerpiece for Shi'ite resistance to Ba'athist persecution as disgruntled Shi'ites began looking for answers and ways in which to shrug off the mantle of repression. Led by the charismatic Shi'ite cleric, Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, the *Dawwa* party received both financial and political support from Iran, which sought to undermine the Ba'athists in Baghdad. These events were not completely unknown to the Iraqi regime, and by the time of the Iranian Revolution in 1979, Ba'athist leaders already had their eyes keenly fixed on southern Iraq as a potential threat to their monopoly over political power.

The Sunni repression of Iraq's Shi'ite communities continued until the fall of the Ba'athists on 9 April 2003. In retrospect, and given America's track record in southern Iraq, the Shi'ites half-hearted support for coalition forces after occupation should have come as no surprise to U.S. policymakers. From their perspective, the Shi'ites of Iraq have good reasons to be wary of American, coalition, or interim government promises. Iraqi Shi'ites saw the U.S. withdrawal from southern Iraq following the first Gulf War as an unforgivable betrayal, as many Shi'ite leaders had anticipated U.S. ground forces to liberate them from Saddam's regime. On 11 March 1991, a final desperate request for American assistance by Shi'ite Imam Abd al-Majid al-Khoei was ignored by U.S. policymakers who maintained that their mission had been the liberation of Kuwait, and the necessity to "remain neutral."[13]

Within the month, the departure of American forces from southern Iraq saw the rallying of Saddam's Republican Guard units to obliterate Shi'ite resistance in the South. In the months that followed, Saddam took further revenge, using the uprising as an excuse to purge the Shi'ite communities of any possible militants, opposition, and radical elements. A confirmed tally of the dead was never released, but unconfirmed reports

[13] Juan Cole, "The United States and Shi'ite Religious Factions in Post-Ba'athist Iraq," in *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 57, No. 4 (Washington DC: Middle East Institute Publications, Autumn 2003), 549 available from http://www.mideasti.org/articles/doc161.html; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

estimate that upwards of 100,000 Shi'ites were slaughtered in Saddam's swift and bloody reprisals.[14] In the wake of this perceived betrayal, many local Shi'ite leaders and clerics were also executed, thousands of Shi'ite civilians fled to the countryside, and anti-American resentment within Iraq's Shi'ite communities began to grow.

Over the next decade, the Shi'ites of southern Iraq remained locked under the blanket of a largely U.S. monitored "no fly zone", and a continuing tit-for-tat stalemate between U.S. warplanes and elusive Iraqi anti-aircraft systems. The eventual result was exactly the opposite of what American policy-makers and U.N. officials had hoped for. The U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq had failed to uproot the Ba'athist regime in Baghdad and Saddam Hussein had actually consolidated his power through adroit political maneuvering and the manipulation of tribal alliances. Saddam never forgot or forgave what he saw as Shi'ite treason, and he used all the tools at his disposal to punish the Shi'ite communities of southern Iraq. United Nations sponsored economic sanctions meant to hurt Saddam's regime were brought to bear against the southern Shi'ites, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of thousands, largely because of starvation, disease, and the inadequacy of basic social services. Oil revenues were diverted north, and massive development projects such as the construction of "Saddam's Canal," and the draining of the southern marshes had unprecedented effects on the Shi'ites of Iraq. In what has been viewed as one of the worst man-made ecological disasters in history, the loss of Iraq's fertile southern marshes deprived millions of Iraqi Shi'ites of their traditional croplands and subsistence. The result of this campaign against the Shi'ites was their virtual withdrawal from the limelight of Iraqi politics and increasing mistrust of Western policies in Iraq. Other than a few sporadic incidents, the Shi'ites in southern Iraq remained relatively quiet during this time, badly scarred by Saddam's brutality in 1991 and wary of American promises.

In the spring of 2003 and at the cessation of major combat operations, Iraq's Shi'ite community refrained from actively sponsoring attacks on coalition forces, preferring to quietly "wait and see" what the future would hold. While Muqtada al-Sadr had begun building the Mahdi Army as early as the summer of 2003, this Shi'ite group had refrained from engaging coalition forces for almost a year. During this time,

[14] Mark LeVine, "The Shiite Factor," ABC News International (09 April 2004), available from http://abcnews.go.com/International/story?id=79551&page=1; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

coalition forces were becoming increasingly committed to fighting a growing Sunni insurgency in central Iraq. As the months wore on, Shi'ite leaders began to worry about the possibility of an American-Sunni alliance, aimed at stemming the Sunni insurgent problem. This move would cut the Shi'ites out of the new government, or at minimum, under-represent their communities. America's close relationships with neighboring Sunni countries did not help this perception, as many Sunni Arab leaders, especially those in Saudi Arabia and Jordan, still remain fearful of a Shi'ite led Iraq. The concerns of Shi'ite leaders grew with the initial Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) proposed plan for an Iraqi interim government which called for local caucuses. Feeling that this plan was vulnerable to external tampering, Grand Ayatollah Sistani refused to support the CPA, calling for immediate elections.[15]

With time and several Sunni-sponsored attacks in the South, Shi'ite patience began to wane, and by the spring of 2004, Muqtada al-Sadr had made a name for himself around the world through his inflammatory criticism of the United States and the Iraqi provisional authority. The turning point marking the evolution of the Mahdi army into a violent insurgency followed shortly. This transition was prompted by two distinct incidents in the spring of 2004 indicating a peak in tensions between al-Sadr and coalition forces. In March of 2004, U.S. forces oversaw the closure of al-Sadr's newspaper, *al-Hawzah*. The newspaper had been printing over 10,000 copies a week, and according to U.S. officials, *al-Hawzah* was being disseminated with "intent to disrupt general security and incite violence."[16] The same month, U.S. forces, in an effort to pressure al-Sadr to step down his rhetoric, arrested one of his closest aides, Mustafa al-Ya'qubi, who was taken into custody by Iraqi officials on the suspected involvement in the murder of moderate Shi'ite cleric Imam Abd al-Majid al-Khoei in April of 2003. In April of 2004, less than a month after Ya'qubi's arrest, the Iraqi government issued a warrant for the arrest of al-Sadr on related charges. With al-Sadr's sudden personal involvement at stake

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15 Laurie Mylroie, "A Shiite Awakening," in *Bitter Lemons International*, Ed. 16, Vol. 2 (29 April 2004), available from http://www.bitterlemons-international.org/inside.php?id=151; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

16 Rajiv Chandrasekaran and Anthony Shadid, "U.S. Targeted Fiery Cleric in Risky Move," *Washington Post Foreign Service* (11 April 2004), available from www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A2679-2004Apr10; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

and mounting tensions between the Mahdi Army and the coalition authority, conflict became unavoidable.

B. THE MAHDI ARMY AND AFFILIATES

In comparison with other sectarian or national groups in Iraq, the Shi'ite community has produced only one major insurgency (the Mahdi Army), with its own demographic. This section will examine the Mahdi Army and the involvement of foreign affiliates in supporting this movement, noting specific tendencies of this insurgent group which have made it unique in comparison with Iraq's other insurgent movements.

While the Sunni and transnational insurgent groups have taken on various shapes with a variety of different goals, the Shi'ite insurgency in Iraq has been comprised almost exclusively of the Mahdi Army, headed by the young Shi'ite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. Estimates of the number of insurgents in the Mahdi Army have ranged from 10,000 to 15,000 fighters, not including logistical or passive support.[17] The group's fighters are mostly young, disaffected Iraqi men from al-Kut and the slums of Baghdad's Shi'ite neighborhoods.[18] With unemployment rates at nearly 70%, these areas were prime targets for al-Sadr, who rallied followers by citing Iraq's postwar lawlessness, "lack of basic services in Shi'ite urban areas, and coalition disregard for the cultural and societal norms of the population."[19] Incentives also helped to increase al-Sadr's numbers, as he reportedly recruited many of his fighters "with offers of money and welfare for their families."[20] The preponderance of their weapons were looted after the war, bought cheaply on the black market, or simply brought home by former Iraqi soldiers following the disbanding of the Iraqi Army. Because of this, most of the Mahdi Army's weapons are considered man-portable light arms, such as automatic rifles, rocket propelled

17 Samir Haddad and Mazin Ghazi, "Who Kills Hostages in Iraq: an Inventory of Iraqi Resistance Groups," *Al Zawra Newspaper* (Baghdad: 19 September 2004), translated by FBIS on FAS online, available from http://www.fas.org/irp/news/2004/09/az091904.html; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

18 Larry Diamond, "What Went Wrong in Iraq," in *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2004), available from http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20040901faessay83505-p10/larry-diamond/what-went-wrong-in-iraq.html; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

19 Ahmed Hashim, "Understanding the Roots of the Shi'a Insurgency in Iraq," in *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol. 2 Issue 13 (Washington D.C.: The Jamestown Foundation publications, 1 July 2004), 4.

20 Ann Scott Tyson, "Insurgents in Iraq Show Signs of Acting as Network," in *Christian Science Monitor* (28 April 2004), available from http://csmonitor.com/2004/0428/p03s01-usmi.html; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

grenades, homemade bombs, and mortars. Practicing in garbage dumps and outlying areas, the vast majority of the Mahdi Army's cadre is also poorly trained, lacking any significant degree of instruction on firing doctrine and small unit tactics. Beyond this, without a sound logistical base and long-term sustainability, "al-Sadr's forces were not successful in either taking or holding positions when faced with a high-quality, aggressive coalition force opponent."[21]

Another critical difference which marks the Shi'ite insurgency as different from other groups is the participation of state-sponsored elements in supporting the Mahdi Army. While the bulk of al-Sadr's forces may have been poorly trained youths, [22] *Badr* Corps, Lebanese *Hizballah*, and even Iranian involvement in supporting the Shi'ite insurgency is highly probable. "Military sources" from within Iraq have reported that al-Sadr is "being aided directly by Iran's Revolutionary Guard" and by *Hizballah*.[23] While there is no hard evidence linking these groups directly to violent attacks, the possibility of support and future involvement cannot be discounted. The *Badr* Corps is of especially grave concern, as the extensive training of its members, equipping, and political indoctrination provides the Shi'ite community within Iraq a ready-trained insurgent force. With the Ba'ath Party's expulsion of thousands of Shi'ite activists during the 1970s and 1980s, these elements began to congregate and mobilize under the protection and support of Iran. They eventually formed the *Badr* Corps, a strongly anti-Saddamist paramilitary force based in Western Iran. This organization was composed of 10,000 militiamen, funded by Iran and trained by Iran's clerically controlled military force, the *Pasdaran*.[24] Well armed and well supplied, the *Badr* Corps consisted of infantry, armored, artillery, anti-aircraft, and commando sections. Their strategy was to establish a strong resistance

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21 Jeffery White, "Crisis in Iraq, Assessment and Implications, Part I," in *Policywatch*, No. 861 (Washington D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy Publications, 21 April 2004), available from http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=1739; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

22 Juan Cole, "Informed Comment: Thoughts on the Middle East, History, and Religion" (5 October 2004), available from http://www.juancole.com/2004/10/41-dead-over-100-wounded-2-us-soldiers.html; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

23 Rowan Scarborough, "Iran, Hezbollah Support al-Sadr," *The Washington Times* (7 April 2004), available from http://www.washtimes.com/national/20040407-124311-9361r.htm; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

24 W. Andrew Terrill, "The United States and Iraq's Shi'ite Clergy: Partners or Adversaries," (Carlisle, PA: United States Army War College Strategic Studies Institute Publications, February 2004), 25, available from www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2004/clergy.pdf; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

within Iraq, mobilize Iraqis in exile, and eventually overtake the Ba'athist regime and install an Islamic government.

With the downfall of the Ba'athist regime and the ensuing chaos, it is unclear exactly how many *Badr* Corps members filtered back into Iraqi society, bringing with them training, experience, and possibly even weapons. In recent months, the SCIRI has fallen under the leadership of Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, who has chosen to participate in Iraq's new government by endorsing the SCIRI as a legitimate party. In addition to this, the SCIRI has also made great efforts to convince both Iraqis and U.S. policymakers that it has no intentions on destabilizing Iraq and that the *Badr* Corps is no threat to the future stability of Iraq. The SCIRI's leadership has gone further to prove their innocence of the post-war violence by stating that their militia forces have discarded their heavy weapons in an effort to work within the system, and the SCIRI has even changed the name of the *Badr* Corps to the *Badr* Organization in an attempt to move away from its militant image.[25] Regardless of the SCIRI's public statements and purposeful distancing from the Mahdi Army, there is no guarantee that at least a portion of the thousands of armed and well trained Shi'ite fighters did not lend support to their Shi'ite countrymen, who share the same Khomeinist ideals.

Statements by Iranian defectors and Arab newspaper sources have not been as vague and have indicated far more direct Iranian involvement in supporting the Mahdi Army. A source within the *Quds* Army, the section of the *Pasdaran* responsible for training foreign groups, told *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* newspaper that al-Sadr had been allowed to set up three camps in the cities of Qasr Shireen, 'Ilam, and Hamid, in Iran for the purpose of training 800-1,200 of his supporters in military tactics.[26] In a different interview with *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat,* a defected Iranian Intelligence official who had been active in postwar Iraq claimed that Iranian intelligence agents had crossed into Iraq, using 18 Shi'ite charities in Kazimiya, Baghdad, Karbala, Najaf, Kufa, Nasriyah, Basra, and other cities with sizable Shi'ite populations, to recruit militants under the pretext of providing social services.[27] The same source also claimed that following the coalition

[25] W. Andrew Terrill, "The United States and Iraq's Shi'ite Clergy: Partners or Adversaries," 27.

[26] Nimrod Raphaeli, "Iran's Stirrings in Iraq," in *Inquiry and Analysis* (5 May 2004), available from http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=ia&ID=IA17304 ; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

[27] Ibid.

invasion of Iraq, Iran had been spending over 70 million dollars a month in Iraq to support their activities "both covert and overt."[28] This notion of foreign government intervention or even sponsorship of insurgent groups is significant, as it adds a new dimension to influences on, and possible magnitude of a Shi'ite insurgency.

C. MUQTADA AL-SADR AND HIS POPULARITY

Using his familial ties, clerical relationships, and Iraqi national identity, Muqtada al-Sadr became the centerpiece for the rise of the Mahdi Army. Through the successful exploitation of common Iraqi sentiments for jobs, security, and a coalition withdrawal, al-Sadr was able to build a following from the poor Shi'ite communities of Iraq. This section will examine Muqtada al-Sadr's personal and familial characteristics, which enabled him to rapidly gain a short-lived burst of popularity and create a Shi'ite insurgency in Iraq.

The popularity of Muqtada al-Sadr among Iraqi Shi'ites and his ability to rally such a large number of supporters in a short period of time can be attributed to several factors. His familial ties and tribal connections are probably his greatest credits, as al-Sadr was a household name that had been associated with Shi'ite activism in Iraq well before Muqtada had begun his clerical studies. Muqtada al-Sadr is the son of former Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr, and nephew of former Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Baqir al-Sadr. Considered to be "the most prominent intellectual figure among the Shi'i radical *ulama* of post-monarchic Iraq", Mohammad Baqir al-Sadr was one of the founders of the Shi'ite *Dawwa* Party, and directly responsible for bringing the fundamentalist notion of Islamic government into Iraq.[29] The murder of Mohammad Baqir al-Sadr at the hands of Iraqi security forces in April of 1980 only helped to increase the al-Sadr family's standing as martyrs for the Iraqi Shi'ite cause.

In a culture where familial ties and tribal affiliations are extremely important, Muqtada al-Sadr's family also holds *seyyed* status, which maintains that he is a direct

28 Nimrod Raphaeli, "Iran's Stirrings in Iraq."

29 Nakash, "The Shi'is of Iraq," 137.

descendent of the Prophet Mohammed.[30] Beyond his tribal affiliations, the fact that the al-Sadr family is of Iraqi origin in a society where the majority of ranking Shi'ite clerics have been of Iranian origin, is also extremely significant. Muqtada has been able to use this to his advantage, giving the fundamentalist Mahdi Army an Iraqi nationalist flavor, which has greatly increased the appeal of the al-Sadr movement among Iraqi Shi'ites.

Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr also left his son an inheritance that has helped his legitimacy. Following his assassination in February of 1999, Muqtada al-Sadr took control of his father's organization.[31] Prior to his death, Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr had developed a reputation among Iraq's Shi'ites as an outspoken activist of the *Natiqah* (vocal) school, and as a popular *mujtahid* (Jurist).[32] He had also won support among many of Iraq's poor, urban, Shi'ites through his charity work and his calls for an end to Iraq's social injustice through the foundation of an Islamic state.[33] In honor of his service to the community, Iraq's Shi'ites even renamed Baghdad's poor suburb of Saddam City to Sadr City. The result of this legacy was an existing social base of legitimacy and support for Muqtada al-Sadr, from which he could draw followers.

While Muqtada al-Sadr has made a conscious effort to establish the Mahdi Army as an Iraqi movement, a considerable difference between this movement and other insurgent groups is the degree of legitimizing support that al-Sadr has been able to garner from his relationship with Iranian clerics. Of notable significance is al-Sadr's relationship with hard-liner Iranian Grand Ayatollah Kazem al-Ha'eri, supporter of the precedence of Islamic law in government, and close friends with al-Sadr's father, Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr. Upon his death, Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr had left instructions that his followers take direction from Grand Ayatollah Kazem al-

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30 Faleh Jabar, "Rethinking Iraq: Tribal Identities," in *Middle East Journal* (Washington DC: Middle East Institute Publications, 25 April 2004), available from http://www.mideasti.org/articles/doc234.html; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

31 Dan Murphy, "Sadr the Agitator: Like Father, Like Son," in *Christian Science Monitor* (24 April 2004), available from http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0427/p01s03-woiq.htm; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

32 Mahan Abedin, interview with Ghanem Jawad, Head of the Culture and Human Rights office of the al-Khoei Foundation, Transcription in *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin* (May 2004), available from http://www.meib.org/articles/0405_iraqi.htm; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

33 May Ying Welsh, "Sadr City: Support from the Poor," in *al-Jazeera World News* (27 April 2004), available from http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/D58B4A08-5E73-4A57-B8A3-2E478F0B6DAD.htm; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

Ha'eri, and since May of 2003, frequent visits between al-Sadr and clerics in Tehran have caused U.S. policymakers to pay even more attention to this connection.[34] Due to his close relationship with al-Ha'eri, al-Sadr even had arranged to have himself designated as the "special representative of the Ayatollah", allowing him to "speak with considerable religious authority despite his youth and lack of theological standing.[35] Ha'eri himself is considered to be strongly anti-American and has "repeatedly warned the Iraqi public that U.S. forces are occupation troops and not liberation forces."[36] This support continued until last summer, when al-Ha'eri publicly stripped al-Sadr of this title. Until this time, the young cleric enjoyed a great deal of relatively unchecked authority which allowed him to build, train, and equip the Mahdi Army with the backing of older, well respected Iranian clerics.

A final reason for al-Sadr's popularity is far more simplistic and emotional. In the aftermath of the Ba'athist fall, many Iraqis came to see U.S. forces as occupation troops, which had come to Iraq to usurp power as well as reap the political and economic benefits of occupation. Frustrated Shi'ites who had lived under Sunni repression now worried about the possibility that they would be living under foreign repression, and Iraq would never truly be autonomous of the United States. With the heavy footprint of American forces in Iraq on their minds, many Iraqi Shi'ites saw the transfer of Iraqi sovereignty on 30 June 2004 as a sham.[37] Other credentials aside, al-Sadr began to win popularity among Iraqi Shi'ites based on what was perceived as an act of courage in defiance of an increasingly American controlled Iraq.

D. GOALS AND IDEOLOGICAL BASIS OF THE AL-SADR MOVEMENT

The Al-Sadr Movement in Iraq had three basic stated goals: The preservation of Muqtada al-Sadr from imprisonment; the expulsion of foreign forces from Iraq; and the establishment of a Shi'ite Islamic government in Iraq based on Khomeini's model in Iran.

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34 Dan Murphy, "Sadr the Agitator: Like Father, Like Son."

35 W. Andrew Terrill, "The United States and Iraq's Shi'ite Clergy: Partners or Adversaries," 19.

36 Ibid., 19.

37 Ahmed S. Hashim, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq," (Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College Publishers, 4 June 2004), 32.

When looking at Iraq's other insurgent groups, only the expulsion of U.S. forces from Iraq can be held in common with the Sunni and transnational categories.

The first, and clearly the most basic goal of al-Sadr's Movement was simply to protect himself from what he perceived as his impending arrest at the hands of a U.S. puppet government. With the closure of *al-Hawzah* and the arrest of Mustafa al-Ya'qubi, al-Sadr was confident of a U.S. led effort to arrest and silence him. The explosion of violence in the spring of 2004 and the accompanying media attention established Muqtada al-Sadr as a new force to be reckoned with in Iraq, and his popularity soared.[38] Well aware that the United States could not afford to make the young cleric a martyr, al-Sadr had successfully maneuvered himself into a safe zone, not only starting a movement that increased his popularity, but simultaneously saving himself from a jail cell.

The next goal of al-Sadr's movement was attractive to many Iraqis, even those who did not share al-Sadr's extremist religious views. He demanded the immediate withdrawal of foreign forces from Iraq, a notion which appealed to the nationalist pride of many Shi'ites and Sunnis alike. While al-Sadr obviously did not succeed in driving out foreign forces, his nationalist oriented message brought him not only followers, but sympathizers as well, who were frustrated by Iraq's poor social services, employment rate, and pervasive security environment since the fall of the Ba'athists.

The final goal of Muqtada al-Sadr's movement is a deeply ideological one, which involves Ayatollah Khomeini's notion of the precedence of Islamic law and clerical rule in government. Although this notion of Islamic government was used as the ideological backbone for the al-Sadr movement, the roots of this concept predate the 2003 Iraq war by several decades. It was during the 1960s and early 1970s that the shrine city of Najaf played host to what was to become some of the most influential religious scholars in history, including Ayatollah Khomeini, Ayatollah Mushin al-Hakim, Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, Musa al-Sadr, Ibrahim al-Amin, and Hassan Nasrallah.[39] During this time, new and innovative ideas surfaced amidst regional currents of communism, socialism, Arab nationalism, and capitalism. One of these concepts was Ayatollah Khomeini's *wilayat-i faqih*, or "guardianship of the state." *Wilayat-i faqih* is "predicated on the belief in the

[38] Larry Diamond, "What Went Wrong in Iraq."

[39] Ali Rahnema, "Pioneers of Islamic Revival," (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd., 1994), 194.

Islamic state as the best form of government," and it was Khomeini's assertion that it was the *ulama*'s responsibility to take guardianship of the state as they might do of an orphanage or hospital.[40] Khomeini believed that instead of doing nothing, Shi'ite activism through guardianship of the state was necessary in preparation for the arrival of the twelfth Imam, or Mahdi.

The Iranian Revolution was born out of this period of radicalization, and in and of itself it was probably the single greatest inspiration for Shi'ite fundamentalists worldwide. Its effects were felt in mosques throughout the world, as Shi'ite fundamentalism had been able to establish the world's first modern Islamic state. This was incredibly significant on multiple levels, as "the new masters in Iran considered themselves to be the true standard-bearers of Islam."[41] In essence, the success of the Iranian Revolution was used as a self-righteous promotion of Shi'ism over Sunni Islam, supporting the notion that Shi'ism is the true path of Islam, succeeding where Sunni fundamentalism had failed. While celebrated by Iraqi Shi'ites, this arrogance was rejected by Sunni leaders throughout the Muslim world. In the long term, it also functioned to build Arab support for Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq War and his repression of Iraq's Shi'ite communities.

Beyond the triumph of Shi'ism, the Iranian revolution also demonstrated the power of the masses, "that a movement springing from a broad spectrum of society could bring down a powerful government."[42] In fact, the Iranian revolution had succeeded in the face of incredible resistance, including an organized and brutal state mechanism known as the *Savak*, meant to destroy Iranian internal dissent through intimidation, torture, and murder. The revolution had also been accomplished despite Iran's powerful western allies, most notably the United States. All of this combined to give Islamists, specifically Shi'ite Islamists, a tremendous boost in courage and moral self-righteousness. Shi'ite clerics in Lebanon, Iraq, and other parts of the Middle East were given a new hope and conviction. Inspired by these events, former Grand Ayatollah

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40 Hamid Enayat, "Iran: Khumayni's Concept of the 'Guardianship of the Jurisconsult,'" in *Islam and the Political Process*, ed. James Piscatori (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 164.

41 Gilles Kepel, "Jihad, the Trial of Political Islam," (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 119.

42 Ibid., 118.

Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr, and Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Baqir al-Sadr became tremendous proponents of the politicization of clerics and their involvement in government. Following in the footsteps of his Khomeinist oriented relatives, al-Sadr is also an advocate of the Iranian model of the precedence of Islamic law in the new Iraqi government.

The principle of the *Wilayat-i faqih* is at the very heart of the al-Sadr Movement and this deeply-rooted ideological basis sets the Shi'ite insurgency apart from many of Iraq's other insurgent groups. As opposed to the Sunnis or transnationals, the *Wilayat-i faqih* provided Muqtada al-Sadr with a plan for the future of Iraq from the onset, and a historical legacy on which to base this plan.. Despite this, the notion of an Islamic government was not a vision supported by most of Iraq's Shi'ites, and has brought Muqtada al-Sadr into direct conflict with Iraq's more traditionalist Shi'ite clerics. The most celebrated of these traditionalists has been Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, who has advocated a more "quietist" role of the Shi'ite clergy, emphasizing the separation of religious and state authority.

E. CLERICAL DIVISIONS, AYATOLLAH SISTANI, AND THE END OF THE AL-SADR MOVEMENT

The divisions among Iraq's Shi'ites, especially within the Shi'ite clerical leadership, played a large part in the rise and fall of the al-Sadr movement and are likely to continue being a driving force behind decisions made within this community. While Muqtada al-Sadr was able to rally thousands of extremely vocal and active supporters, his followers still comprised a minority group within Iraq's Shi'ite population, most of whom identified with Ayatollah Sistani and his more traditionalist perspectives on Islam and politics.

In retrospect, it is possible that al-Sadr became a pawn in a much larger game and was unwittingly used by far more senior and influential clerics. Given al-Sadr's general lack of professional standing and young age (which is heavily disputed), some have speculated that there were other forces at work behind the Shi'ite uprisings, deliberately allowing al-Sadr to consolidate the Mahdi Army through their inaction.[43] In one line of

[43] STRATFOR, Strategic Forecasting, "Iraq Insurgency: Rise of the Shia," (27 December 2004).

thinking, the motivation for allowing al-Sadr's rise could have been twofold, limiting al-Sadr's growing popularity on one hand, while simultaneously sending a warning on the part of Iraq's senior clerical leadership, who were beginning to run short on patience with the progress of the post-war political reconstruction of Iraq, and who felt that they were "beginning to loose the upper hand in their long-term dealings with Washington."[44] A massive Shi'ite insurgency in southern Iraq lead by a politically expendable upstart could refocus Washington's attention. Muqtada al-Sadr was more than willing to comply, as the xenophobic firebrand cleric had already begun to make statements about the need to drive out the coalition occupiers, and follow in his family footsteps as a radical proponent of the *Wilayat-i faqih.*

By the summer of 2004, it is possible that Iraq's senior clerics thought that their point had been made, and when the Shi'ite insurgency began to threaten the physical safety of Iraq's shrines, these clerics began to check al-Sadr's power. As early as May of 2004, Shi'ite clerics began discussing the al-Sadr issue, and on 6 May, approximately 150 of Iran and Iraq's most senior Shi'ite clerics and their representatives convened in Baghdad to decide their next move with regard to al-Sadr and his Mahdi Army.[45] By June, many of Iraq's previously passive Shi'ite tribal and religious leaders also began to slowly distance themselves from al-Sadr, showing that they were "willing to limit his influence and apply pressure in order to constrain his actions."[46] In the months that followed, Grand Ayatollah Kazem al-Ha'eri publicly broke his connection with al-Sadr, politically marginalizing him, and "Shi'i clerics reportedly pushed for aggressive coalition operations against the Mahdi Army up to the very boundaries of the holy sites."[47] While this strong internal pressure on the al-Sadr movement was the trigger for its eventual demise, much more deeply rooted factors, such as the diverse nature of Iraq's Shi'ite community, undercut this movement.

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[44] STRATFOR, Strategic Forecasting, "Iraq Insurgency: Rise of the Shia."

[45] Iran Press Service, "Moqtada Sadr Urged by Sh'ia Authorities to Leave Najaf and Karbala," (6 May 2004), available from http://www.iran-press-service.com/ips/articles-2004/may/iraq_sadr_6504.shtml; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

[46] Jeffery White and Ryan Phillips, "Muqtada Al-Sadr's Continuing Challenge to the Coalition, Part II: An Adaptive Enemy," in *Policywatch*, No. 874, (Washington D.C.: the Washington Institute for Near East Policy Publications, 7 January 2004), available from http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=1752; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

[47] Ibid.

F. THE UNPOPULARITY OF THE AL-SADR MOVEMENT AND SHI'ITE DIVERSITY

At the end of August 2004, and with American Marines only blocks away from the Imam Ali Mosque, Muqtada al-Sadr gave in to internal Shi'ite pressures, interim government demands and coalition military coercion, and left Najaf for Sadr City. Al-Sadr's fall was largely due to societal factors beyond the application of military force and clerical politics. At the onset of hostilities between the Mahdi Army and coalition forces in May of 2004, Muqtada al-Sadr was at the height of his popularity, boasting a 68% popularity rating among Iraq's estimated 15 million Shi'ites.[48] Regardless, only two percent of Iraq's Shi'ites approved of al-Sadr as a presidential candidate at this time.[49] Even more telling, was al-Sadr's noticeable absence from Iraq's political limelight in the country's first democratic elections in decades. A coalition of over 22 different Shi'ite parties congregated under an election bloc known as the United Iraqi Alliance (UIA) for the January 2005 elections. Multitudes of Iraqi Shi'ites including Ayatollah Sistani, and even Ahmed Chalabi have prominent roles in the new parties. Despite this, the names of al-Sadr and his chief lieutenants were not listed among the bloc's 228 candidates.[50] In less than six months, Muqtada al-Sadr went from being one of the most known and influential Iraqi Shi'ites, to not even offering representation in the election.

Superficially, the singular nature of this insurgency, the strong clerical leadership of the Shi'ites, and a legacy of historical repression at the hands of Sunnis, gave this community an image of unity and the Mahdi Army the appearance of a popular movement. In truth, the Shi'ite insurgency was not a monolithic phenomenon, and was embraced by only a small percentage of Iraq's population. While many Iraqis within this community may have sympathized with their Shi'ite countrymen, desired for the departure of foreign troops, and were inspired by Muqtada al-Sadr's courage, few were truly committed to an Islamic government, the use of violence, and the al-Sadr movement in the long-term. The al-Sadr movement also had some "personal" characteristics, which

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[48] Scott Baldauf, "Sadr Plays to Power of Martyrdom," in *Christian Science Monitor* (12 August 2004), available from http://csmonitor.com/2004/0812/p01s02-woiq.htm; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Alastair Macdonald, "Iraqi Shi'ites Launch Powerful Election Bloc," in *Reuters News Service* (9 December 2004), available from http://in.news.yahoo.com/041209/137/2idfh.html; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

made it unpalatable to the general Shi'ite population of Iraq. Lacking the appropriate training and titles, Muqtada al-Sadr is far too young to have any significant degree of clerical authority.[51] Due to this, and what appears to be "coat tailing" on his father's reputation, many Iraqi Shi'ites looked unfavorably on al-Sadr's moves for power. Also, al-Sadr's use of the term "Mahdi" to describe his group of insurgents enraged many Shi'ites who feel that the under-qualified al-Sadr is making the not-so-subtle suggestion that he may be the returned twelfth Imam. The general unpopularity of al-Sadr and his Mahdi Army is underpinned by wide divisions within Iraq's Shi'ite community and diversity with regard to politics and Shi'ite views on the future of Iraq.

Iraq's Shi'ites are by no means homogenous in their socioeconomic, ethnic, and political demographics. "There are secularists (including liberals and communists) and various religious groups, urban and rural dwellers, rich and poor, Shi'ites who have never left Iraq and those who have spent decades in exile."[52] Clear divisions within the UIA highlight the diversity among Iraqi Shi'ites, as the bloc's 22 parties have a variety of different agendas. *Al-Dawa* and SCIRI are the UIA's two largest Islamist parties, but the UIA also has smaller less known Islamist parties focusing on specific issues, such as the Islamic Virtue Party. The Iraqi National Congress (INC), is secular, and one of the largest parties in the UIA. The Turkmen Fidelity Movement, Islamic Union for Iraqi Turkomans, Fayli Kurd Islamic Union, and Islamic Fayli Grouping in Iraq are UIA Shi'ite parties with an ethnic focus, representing many of Iraq's non-Arab Shi'ites. *Hezbollah*, an organization with long historic ties to Iran, has also sponsored two parties within the UIA Shi'ite coalition. While not on the UIA list of political parties, the Communists have historically drawn support from poor Shiites in southern Iraq. Founded in 1934, the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) is Iraq's oldest political party, originally embraced by Iraqi Shi'ites before gaining popularity among middle-class Sunnis.[53] This extremely diverse set of political parties with their own distinct agendas is

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51 Brendan I. Koerner, "So You Want to be and Ayatollah: How Shi'ite Clerics Earn the Name" (6 April 2004), available from http://slate.msn.com/id/2098364/; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

52 Yitzhak Nakash, "The Shiites and the Future of Iraq," in *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2003), available from http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20030701faessay15402/yitzhak-nakash/the-shi-ites-and-the-future-of-iraq.html; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

reflective of the wide divisions among Iraqi Shi'ites. Understanding this diversity is useful in explaining not only the downfall of the al-Sadr movement, but the general nature of Iraq's Shi'ite community.

G. SIGNIFICANCE

Despite its current status, the al-Sadr Movement is significant since it demonstrates that the Shi'ite insurgency differs from the Sunni and transnational insurgencies. A great deal of this arises from the historical repression that the Shi'ites of Iraq have endured, and the revolutionary influences of Shi'ite fundamentalism. In addition, the conscious effort on the part of Iraq's senior clerical leadership to manipulate and undermine al-Sadr in order to manage the political atmosphere within post-war Iraq, is also informative and unique to the Shi'ite insurgency. The clerics' willingness to allow an insurgency to continue, aided by their own passive inaction, in order to make a political point, followed by their ability to help quiet this insurgency through internal pressure, speaks volumes on the power and influence of Iraq's senior clerical leadership, particularly that of Ayatollah Sistani. The general loyalty of Iraq's Shi'ite communities to their religious leadership is also important.

As opposed to the highly factionalized Sunni communities, Iraqi Shi'ites have proved to be fairly loyal to their clerical leadership, showing tremendous restraint against taking up arms in the immediate months following the U.S. occupation of Iraq. Iraq's Shi'ite clerics, most notably Grand Ayatollah Ali Husaini al-Sistani, urged patience and civil obedience in the wake of the Ba'athist collapse, and the Shi'ites of southern Iraq generally listened. Recent polls support the notion that Iraq's Shi'ite clergy holds a great deal of influence over the Shi'ite population. In survey conducted by the Department of State Office of Research prior to the January 2005 parliamentary elections, 87% of eligible Iraqi Shi'ites sated that they would vote but 76% of the respondents also said that

[53] Rawya Rageh, "Iraq Communists Hold Rally for Elections," on *Kurd Net*, from Associated Press (8 January 2005), available from http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2005/1/vote36.htm; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

they would boycott the election if directed by a trusted Shi'ite leader.[54] This indicates a tremendous degree of influence which cannot be ignored by American policymakers or Iraq's new government.

Most significant is the fact that the rise and fall of the al-Sadr movement was underpinned by Iraq's extremely diverse Shi'ite community and a variety of different political, economic, and religious agendas. These agendas are becoming clearer as Shi'ite political parties form under Iraq's new government, and we will likely see even greater rifts within this community as Iraqi Shi'ites become more comfortable with free participation in the new system. While many of Iraq's Shi'ites may have initially supported the al-Sadr movement for an array of reasons, the sheer diversity of the community undercut general long-term support the Mahdi Army.

While the last several months have seen the ostensible "turn in" of many of the Mahdi Army's weapons at U.S. sponsored collection centers, and the Mahdi Army seems to have quietly taken a seat, it would be unreasonable to think that the Mahdi Army is completely disarmed. With regard to the future of Iraq, the most important aspect of Iraq's Shi'ite movement "has less to do with its current capabilities and more to do with its potential threat."[55] The rapid rise of such a singularly large and determined insurgent force from Iraq's Shi'ite community is extremely worrisome. This is especially true when considering the fact that the Mahdi Army was lead by a cleric who was only popular for a brief period of time, and garnered substantial sustained support only among a minority of Shi'ites. With this in mind, the rise of a full-blown Shi'ite insurgency under the direct public control of a far more popular cleric such as Sistani, could produce an insurgency on a monumental level and force an indefensible situation for American policymakers and military officials. This is a possibility that must be considered, and the small taste of a Shi'ite insurgency last year was hopefully enough to remind U.S. officials that Iraq's Shi'ites have a massive stake in the future of Iraq, and they are willing to influence their position by force if need be.

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[54] U.S. Department of State Office of Research, "Opinion Analysis, Security Worries Dampen Sunni Enthusiasm to Vote in Iraq Elections," (6 January 2005), Report based on face-to-face interviews with 1,934 Iraqis ages 18 and over, conducted 12-26 December 2004. Margin of error is approximately +/- 4%.

[55] STRATFOR, Strategic Forecasting, "Iraq Insurgency: Rise of the Shia."

III. THE SUNNIS: OVERVIEW AND CURRENT STATUS

Since the fall of Saddam Hussein, the central provinces in Iraq have been the most violent, with the greatest number of insurgent incidents and the strongest anti-coalition resistance. It is in a permissive environment that Iraq's Sunni insurgent groups have flourished, carrying out their planning, recruitment, training, and operations under the nose of the more powerful coalition forces. Armed attacks, bombings, and intimidation campaigns are part of daily life in central Iraq. Since the spring of 2003, over 35 Sunni, Arab insurgent groups have claimed responsibility for acts of violence throughout Iraq.[56] Duplication errors are possible, as certain groups may use multiple names or have changed their names, but it is also likely that smaller local groups exist which coalition sources have not yet identified. Beyond the sheer number of Sunni insurgent groups, "an overwhelming majority of those captured or killed have been Iraqi Sunnis, as well as around 90-95% of those detained."[57] While the coalition has made significant strides in cooperating with local authorities and maintaining general stability in some Kurdish and Shi'ite areas, central Iraq remains and will likely continue to be a difficult challenge for coalition policy makers. It is in this respect that a critical analysis of Iraq's most fierce insurgency involving the Arab Sunnis of central Iraq must be undertaken.

This chapter is directed toward understanding the diverse nature of the Sunni insurgency, examining the common goals of this categorization, as well as the motivations of sub-categories and their individual groups. The Sunni insurgency is divided into four primary groups; Ba'athists/former regime loyalists (FRLs), Iraqi nationalists, regional tribal groups, and indigenous Iraqi Islamists. While Sunni tribal groups are largely concerned with their regional power and prestige vis-à-vis neighboring tribes, FRLs are mainly motivated by a general desire to reestablish the "Old Guard" in power nationally, or at a minimum, prevent this power from falling into the hands of the Shi'ites. Iraqi nationalists are the most diverse sub-category, motivated primarily by their desire to expel foreign forces and insure that Sunni Arabs retain political authority in

56 Anthony H. Cordesman, "The Developing Iraqi Insurgency: Status at End-2004" (Working Draft), (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies Publishers, 22 December 2004), 12.

57 Ibid.

Iraq. Sunni Arab Islamists are also discussed, including the impetus for their revival, their functioning as an inter-group cohesive force, and the divergence of these indigenous Iraqi Islamists from transnational fundamentalists operating in the country.

I pay special attention to the historical significance of tribes in Iraq's politics, and how Saddam Hussein manipulated these tribes through gifts and political machinations in order to consolidate his power. In this way, the Sunnis are shown to have been the big losers after the war. They have multiple motivations for insurgency, including bitterness resulting from a loss in power and prestige, fear of the potential power of the numerically superior Shi'ites in a politically democratic Iraq, and nationalist sentiments opposed to any American presence in Iraq. Divisions among and between these insurgent groups lack absolute definition, as coalition military operations and pressures internal to Iraq have forced the consolidation of many such groups over the past year, allowing for cooperation between Iraqi Sunni groups. In presenting these points, this chapter demonstrates the unique social factors behind the Sunni insurgent groups, their motivations, and relations with each other.

A. ORIGINS: THE SUNNIS UNDER THE BA'ATHISTS

Arab Sunni Muslims only make up approximately 30 to 35 percent of Iraq's population. In general, they are concentrated in a roughly drawn triangle between Tikrit in the North, Ramadi in the West, and Baghdad in the East, creating a region known as the "Sunni Triangle." This region provides the insurgents with the ability to move freely and openly in terrain that they are not only familiar with, but which also affords them the ability to maintain extensive logistical and support networks.

The Sunnis have been a ruling minority over Iraq's Shi'ites for centuries, enjoying the social, political, and economic rewards of their position. Even prior to the Ba'athists, Ottoman Sunnis had run Iraq for centuries, eventually replaced by British-installed Sunni Arabs, who filled the country's top political seats. The rise of the Ba'athists in Iraq not only continued, but took this legacy of a Sunni minority rule to a new level, empowering this population with the wealth of Iraq's natural resources. In the spring of 2003, the toppling of Saddam Hussein's government brought an end to this system and largely disenfranchised the Sunni Arabs and their associated power structures.

This section examines Iraq's Sunni population, interpreting its preferential treatment under the Ba'athists as background to the roots of Iraq's Sunni insurgency. Despite their historical minority rule, Arab Sunnis benefited further by the rise of the Ba'athists to power.

Sunni domination was not always the case within the Ba'ath party, and in many respects, Iraq's Shi'ites were useful in bringing the Ba'ath party to power. Once in place however, the party's Shi'ites were successively driven out of powerful positions. Before 1968, the Shi'ites had substantially more power within the Iraqi Ba'ath party. From 1952 until 1963, Iraq's Shi'ites maintained 53.8% of the party's 53 top command seats, in comparison to the Sunni's 38.5%.[58] With the rise of the Ba'ath party to power in 1968, this fairly representative demographic changed greatly. Between 1963 and 1970, Arab Sunnis came to hold 84.9% of the party's top commands, with Arab Shi'ites in only 5.7% of the top positions.[59] By 1977, the disparity had grown and Sunni Arabs thoroughly dominated the Ba'ath party, holding 93.3% of the organizations top command posts.[60] The locales from which the party's members came were also heavily concentrated in central Iraq, with an increasing number of upper echelon party officials and decision-makers hailing from Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit.

In 1979, Saddam Hussein took power. In the years that followed, due to the country's oil wealth, the GNP multiplied. "[B]y the early 1980s, the state bureaucracy was about 25 percent of the total workforce, and a new class of entrepreneurs, contractors and managers reaped much of the benefits of Iraq's wealth."[61] This new middle class of government bureaucrats and contract employees was heavily Arab Sunni, bringing the country's new oil money and investment into central Iraq. Other major government programs devoted to housing, literacy, health, and education catered to the Arab Sunnis as well, focusing largely on urban areas in central Iraq and depriving the Iraqi north and

58 Hanna Batatu, "The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq," (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 1078.

59 Ibid., 1078.

60 Ibid., 1090.

61 International Crisis Group, "Iraq Backgrounder: What Lies Beneath," in *Middle East Report*, No. 6 (1 October 2002), 6.

Shi'ite southern areas of an equitable distribution of money and resources.[62] Opposition movements and uprisings by the Kurds and Shi'ites fueled Hussein's neglect of these areas.

While Iraq's economy suffered greatly in the 1990s, socio-economic disparity between Iraq's Sunnis and Shi'ite populations continued to grow, and by the fall of Saddam Hussein, southern Iraq had been devastated by poverty and years of neglect. The implementation of United Nations-imposed sanctions failed to dislodge the regime. Instead, the result was Hussein's manipulation of the allocation of basic social services, aid, and foodstuff distribution in order to keep the Kurds and Shi'ites under control.

B. THE CHANGING NATURE OF BA'ATH PARTY'S TRIBAL RELATIONS

Iraq's Sunni population benefited greatly from the Ba'athist minority rule of Sunni Arabs. While Saddam Hussein did receive political support from some Shi'ite tribes during his presidency, the vast majority of Hussein's tribal affiliations were Sunni.[63] Through a complex system of gifts and endowments, not unlike those used by the British in the mandate or tribally-based countries currently, Hussein established his principle base of political support with Iraq's Sunni Arab tribes from the late 1980s until his fall in 2003. Ba'athist support for Iraq's tribes was not always the case, as Iraq's earliest Ba'athists saw tribes as rivals for power and legitimacy. This led to a series of social, economic, and political measures enacted by the Ba'athists, which greatly reduced the power base of Iraq's tribal sheikhs. It was not until the late 1980s and especially the 1990s that Iraq's Ba'athists began to cooperate with the tribes, revitalizing their power base in a *quid pro quo* relationship that was mutually reinforcing, beneficial to the regime and the tribes. During Saddam Hussein's presidency, these traditional tribal power structures were revitalized through political favors in order to further legitimize, consolidate, and insulate his power. The fall of the Ba'athists in the spring of 2003

62 International Crisis Group, "Iraq Backgrounder: What Lies Beneath," 6.

63 Amatzia Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Hussein's Tribal Policies 1991-96," in *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 29 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 7.

brought an abrupt end to this relationship, as well the tremendous benefits of power and prestige that this relationship brought to the Sunni Arabs of central Iraq. The legacy of this reversal of fortune for the Sunnis has been the rise of a multi-faceted Sunni insurgency.

Prior to the mid-1980s the Ba'ath Party had a relatively adversarial relationship with Iraq's tribes. Upon taking power in 1968, the Ba'athists issued their first public communiqué, opposing traditional linkages by stating that the Ba'athists "are against religious sectarianism, racism, and tribalism."[64] There were a variety of philosophical and practical reasons why the Ba'athists initially sought to weaken and marginalize Iraq's tribal networks. Ba'athism is an activist, revolutionary and modernizing political ideology, focused on "effecting a structural transformation in the spirit and thinking of the Arab people which would revolutionize their society."[65] It is based on the "trinity" of unity, freedom, and socialism which became manifested in modern, secular socialism and pan-Arabism.[66] This clearly runs counter to traditional tribal-based notions of governance. Iraq's new Ba'athists saw tribalism as an antiquated system, which eroded their principles of pan-Arabism and Iraqi nationalism. Whereas Ba'athism is centered on the predominance of the state, traditional tribalism produces a sub-national network of loyalties. These loyalties hold familial bonds the strongest and allegiances weaken as one moves farther from the family, through the tribal chain and into general society. Because of this, Ba'athists came to view tribalism as an alternate social support structure and form of legitimacy that challenged the primacy of the Iraqi state. Further, Iraq's rural-based tribal sheikhs also represented a competing social class, as the Ba'athist ranks were largely made up of lower-middle class youths from urban areas.[67]

The Ba'athists used a variety of different social, political and economic measures to control and limit the power of the tribal sheikhs. These policies were aimed largely at the country's most powerful tribes in an effort to check their power. The most prevalent

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64 Amatzia Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Hussein's Tribal Policies 1991-96," 1.

65 Nabil M. Kaylani, "The Rise of the Syrian Ba'ath, 1940-1958: Political Success, Party Failure," in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 5.

66 Ibid., 5.

67 Amatzia Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Hussein's Tribal Policies 1991-96," 2.

and effective technique used by the Ba'athists was land reform. Iraq's tribes were principally rural, gaining power through land ownership and patron-client relationships between tribal sheiks and the peasants who worked the land. The three primary land reform policies undertaken by the Iraqi government were aimed at limiting tribal land ownership, creating worker associations and cooperative farming.[68] In some cases, the Ba'athists even resorted to land seizure as part of this strategy. These new policies undercut the peasant-sheikh tie by forcing the Iraqi government into the middle of this relationship or by completely replacing the tribal sheikh. Whereas the sheikhs and tribe had once been the support structure for administering agriculture, Iraqi peasants became increasingly autonomous from this traditional system, receiving resources and assistance from the state.[69] Demographic trends during the latter half of the twentieth century did not help the rural sheikhs either. Urban industrialization coupled with large migrations out of rural areas and into the cities also undercut the sheikh's power base by depriving them of loyal partisans and a workforce.

While Iraq's Ba'athists had toyed with notions of tribal policy prior to the late 1980s, these policies had been instituted unevenly, and largely to curb the power of tribes which the Ba'athists perceived as threats. The primary impetus for tribal revitalization came in the wake of the Iran-Iraq War, when Saddam Hussein began searching for more domestic support and an internal check against the growing possibility of an Iraqi Shi'ite-Iranian connection.[70] Hussein's efforts to revitalize the Sunni Arab tribes quickened after the first Gulf War, when he found himself faced with massive insurrections by the Shi'ites in the south and the Kurds in the north. By the early 1990s, Saddam Hussein had realized these internal threats to his regime, and embarked upon a domestic campaign of tribal revitalization. Eventually, Hussein's "manipulation of traditional social networks

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68 Amatzia Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Hussein's Tribal Policies 1991-96," 3.

69 Hosham Dawod, "The State-ization of the Tribe and the Tribalization of the State: The Case of Iraq," in *Totaliarism and Tribalism: The Ba'th Regime and Tribes*, eds. Faleh Jabar and Hosham Dawod (London: Saqi, 2003), 117.

70 Amatzia Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Hussein's Tribal Policies 1991-96," 7.

and identities (became) an instrument of expanding his own power base and mobilizing the broader masses at minimal risk to his own authority."[71]

Economic legitimacy had also become a major problem for Saddam Hussein, and by the late 1980s a serious downturn in Iraq's economy had begun to take its toll on Iraqi civil support for their government. Wide ranging economic liberalization and privatization programs were instituted by Saddam Hussein in an attempt to kick start the Iraqi economy in the wake of falling oil prices and the tremendously destructive Iran-Iraq war. The reforms were extremely sudden, with deep economic and social consequences. Labor unions were disbanded, price controls were removed, international investment opportunities were opened, the vast majority of Iraq's foodstuff manufacturers were privatized, and by 1989, 88% of Iraq's agricultural land was privately owned.[72] Lacking any degree of complementary political liberalization measures and institutional market backing, these policies began to fail. "By the summer of 1990, these reforms, coupled with pressures from international creditors, plunged the economy into such chaos that not even the experienced repressive apparatus of the Ba'ath party could guarantee domestic political stability."[73] The aftermath of these failures, combined with Iraq's loss to coalition forces during the first Gulf War and the resulting U.N. sanctions, had a devastating impact on the regime's legitimacy. Thus, Hussein's courting of the tribes and establishment of a new base of support became necessary for regime survival.

There were a variety of reasons that Saddam Hussein chose Sunni tribal Arabs as his vanguard and base. The first and most obvious reason deals with Hussein's own personal origins. A Sunni Arab from Tikrit, Hussein knew that he could rely upon his own kin and tribesmen for unquestionable support. In addition to this, Hussein saw the tribal Sunni Arabs as possessing inherent characteristics, which made them extremely desirable for high government and military positions. Traditional qualities such as

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71 Keiko Sakai, "Tribalization as a Tool of State Control in Iraq: Observations on the Army, the Cabinets and the National Assembly," in *Totaliarism and Tribalism: The Ba'th Regime and Tribes*, eds. Faleh Jabar and Hosham Dawod (London: Saqi, 2003), 137.

72 Kiren Aziz Chaudhry, "Economic Liberalization and the Lineages of the Rentier State," in *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 27, No. 1, (Oct. 1994), 8.

73 Kiren Aziz Chaudhry, "On the Way to Market: Economic Liberalization and Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait," in *Middle East Report*, No. 170, (May.-Jun. 1991), 14.

courage, honor, and a sense of community were typically associated with tribal Arabs by Hussein, who also saw them as the most truly Iraqi and therefore the most loyal.[74]

The association that Saddam Hussein developed with Iraq's Sunni tribes became a give and take relationship in which both sides benefited. Hussein was able to draw on the preexisting tribal networks as an immediate means to categorize and control Iraqis. He used these affiliations to pressure individual Sunni Arabs into stronger allegiances to the state, as he held tribes responsible for the actions of their individual members and individuals responsible for the actions of their greater tribes.[75] Many Iraqi Sunnis found themselves in a collective action dilemma, where they were forced to act in compliance with the regime or bring ruthless consequences upon themselves, as well as their family, friends, and village. Using the tribes, Hussein also shored up the legitimacy of his government through this increased support. He was also able to insulate his regime from any potential internal threats by heavily populating the Republican Guard, Special Republican Guard, and critical government posts with trusted Sunni tribal Arabs.

Despite the control mechanisms placed on Sunni Arab tribes and their sheikhs, they also profited greatly from their relationship with Baghdad. Whereas the institutionalization and enforcement of tribal control mechanisms through torture, imprisonment and intimidation became the stick, political favors to tribes, gifts, and prestige became the carrot. Tribal locales that provided Saddam Hussein with backing received infrastructure improvements such as new roads, schools, and hospitals. Hussein also strengthened his relationships with sheikhs through personal visits and expensive gifts. Some tribes were even allowed carry out their own smuggling operations and administer their own system of tribal law, autonomous from state control.[76] While Hussein could rely on Sunni Arab tribesmen to protect him from internal threats, the tribal sheikhs relied upon Hussein to provide them with jobs, promotions, and prestigious appointments that would be certain to bring money and power back to the tribal locale. This *quid pro quo* system of favors between the government and sub-national groups is

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74 Amatzia Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Hussein's Tribal Policies 1991-96," 5.

75 Ibid., 5.

76 Amatzia Baram, "The Iraqi Tribes and the Post-Saddam System," in *Global Politics*, by the Brookings Institution, (8 July 2003), available from http://www.brookings.edu/views/op-ed/fellows/baram20030708.htm; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

not unique to Iraq, having been used throughout history by autocratic rulers as well as colonial powers who have sought to legitimize their rule. In Iraq, this network of favors brought Sunni tribesmen well under Hussein's control creating a "sense of asymmetrical debt towards the sheikhs and, across them, to the central power."[77]

By 2003, the Sunni Arab tribes had strong linkages with the Ba'athist government through an institutionalized network of Ba'ath-tribal relations. The removal of Saddam Hussein from power and dismemberment of the Ba'ath Party structure destroyed this system of political interdependence from which the tribes benefited. U.S. and coalition soldiers were not seen as liberators, but instead as enemy occupiers that signaled an end to decades of power, prestige, and preferential treatment.

C. SUNNI INSURGENT MOTIVATIONS, GOALS, AND STRATEGY

Although Sunni insurgent sub-groups have specific differences, which will be examined in later sections, the majority of Iraq's Sunni Arab insurgents maintain a basic set of political, economic, and social motivations which are at the center of this categorization. Politically, Sunni insurgents are concerned that the new government will result in Shi'ite empowerment at their expense. Economically, the aftermath of the war has been devastating to employment rates and civil infrastructure. The result has been a plummeting standard of living and soaring unemployment among Iraqis, especially those who had previously relied upon the state for jobs, particularly Sunni Arabs. Socially, many of the Sunni Arabs are still bitter about their sudden loss of power and prestige alongside the Ba'athist regime. Social disorder and civil lawlessness following the war contributed to this bitterness, as many Iraqis have not only been subjected to insurgent-motivated intimidation campaigns, but widespread criminal activity as well.

One of the primary goals of the Sunni insurgents is to impede a democratic process in the country's new government. Given that Shi'ites are Iraq's largest sectarian faction, the country's Sunni Arabs are legitimately fearful of the political power that a democratic system could give this historically repressed group. These fears rise from not only their general loss of political power, but the possibility that a new Shi'ite

77 Hosham Dawod, "The State-ization of the Tribe and the Tribalization of the State: the Case of Iraq," 119.

government may enact retribution which will disenfranchise the Sunnis. It is in this respect that many Sunni insurgent attacks are undertaken to destabilize and delegitimize the system. Even attacks against Iraqi civilians further their efforts, showing Iraqis that their government is powerless to stop the insurgency and lacks the simple ability to police and protect its own people. While the recent January elections were carried out despite the insurgent threat, Sunni insurgents still have a vested interest in attempting to destabilize the government.

Economic woes among Iraq's Sunni Arabs are one of the leading causes of the insurgency. After the seizure of Baghdad by coalition forces in the spring of 2003, it was estimated that over 100,000 FRLs from Iraq's various security forces became unemployed overnight, heavily concentrated in central Iraq, and retaining a wide variety of weapons.[78] Whereas Iraq's Sunni Arabs once occupied many of the country's most prestigious and critical jobs, this population now has an unemployment rate of 30 - 40 percent.[79] Time has not helped, as poverty, joblessness, and the lack of basic social services continues for many Sunni Arabs.

Even Sunni Arabs who have cooperated with coalition forces have been cynical about the coalition's ability to improve economic conditions and infrastructure in the country's central provinces. One local Sunni leader from central Iraq described the aggravation of this predicament, stating that "if the Americans came and developed our general services, brought work for people and transferred their technology to us then we would not have been so disappointed. But it is not acceptable to us as human beings that after one year America is still not able to bring us electricity."[80] This process has become a vicious cycle in all of Iraq, as security concerns due to the ongoing insurgency have limited foreign investment and construction, offering the Iraqis who live in dangerous areas little hope for improving their economic situation and quality of life.

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78 Global Security, "Iraqi Insurgency Groups," available from, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iraq_insurgency.htm; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

79 Sharon Otterman, Iraq: "Quelling the Insurgency," in *Council on Foreign Relations* (23 September 2004), available from http://www.cfr.org/background/background_iraq_quell.php; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

80 Rory McCarthy, "False Dawn of Peace Lost in Violent Storm," in *The Guardian* (8 April 2004), quoted from an interview with Qais Ahmad al-Nai'mi, Sunni council leader in Aadhamiya.

Socially, Iraq's Sunni insurgents have two principle motivations stemming from their loss of power and prestige, and frustration with regard to the crime and civil unrest following the fall of Saddam Hussein. The end of the Ba'athist regime terminated decades of benefits and rewards for Iraq's Sunni Arabs. Young Sunni Arab men were no longer assured good jobs through familial connections and tribal alliances. The prestigious social positions and lifestyle enjoyed by fathers was no longer a guarantee for their sons. The fact that the population is extremely young does not help this situation, as thousands of young, unemployed Iraqis, many with former military training and ready access to weapons, create a very large pool of bodies upon which insurgent groups can draw.

Beyond bitterness related to the loss of social benefits is a general sense of Sunni frustration from Iraq's lack of civil order. Immediately prior to the U.S. led invasion of Iraq, Saddam Hussein let over 200,000 criminals out of Iraq's prisons, worrying the Sunni Arab middle and commercial classes and creating an environment rife with criminal activity.[81] Local criminal gangs blended with local tribal elements, Islamists, and organized insurgent groups, creating a complex mosaic of social lawless. The result greatly affected Iraq's former commercial and middle class of Sunni Arabs, polarizing them and pressuring them to comply with insurgents and criminals in the face of a government and coalition which has been largely unsuccessful in ending the violence, banditry, and intimidation in the central regions. In essence, the coalition's inability to stem the violence and crime in this area has not only discredited it, but also lost any potential to win the Arab Sunni middle class as an ally in the short-term.

These various motivations for Iraq's Sunni insurgent groups have brought them together with one common goal, the expulsion of foreign forces from Iraq. As long as coalition forces remain in Iraq, so will the threat of a democratic government which accommodates the numerically superior Shi'ites and guarantees a loss of Sunni prestige and power. In this way, coalition military forces are the greatest impediment to insurgent groups in Iraq. In contrast with al-Sadr, the Sunnis do not seem to have a concrete ideological program for the future of Iraq. Expelling foreign forces and derailing the

[81] Ahmed S. Hashim, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq," 13.

government are essentially "negative" goals, focusing largely on what the Sunni insurgents do not want as opposed to a "positive" goal, such as a vision for the country's future.[82] This perspective superficially gives the Sunni insurgency a largely rejectionist and destructive flavor.

Indeed, recent events have indicated that instead of choosing to participate in the new government, insurgent groups have focused on eroding the existing political structure and security apparatus. A Department of State survey conducted three weeks prior to the January elections supports this assertion. While the Sunni electoral boycott was a factor, intimidation and security concerns were the primary reasons for the low Sunni voter turnout.[83] "Voters in Baghdad, and the predominantly Sunni cities (were) less sure about voting because of security concerns. Nearly half in Baghdad and Kirkuk, and two-thirds in Tikrit/Baquba (were) very concerned about their family's safety on election day, compared to a quarter or fewer in other areas."[84] Ninety one percent of those surveyed in the mainly Sunni Arab areas of Tikrit and Baquba also said that they would stay home if there were threats of violence against polling stations, as opposed to only 43% in the south and 21% in the mid-Euphrates regions.[85] Prior to the election, insurgents were able to capitalize on these fears by elevating the level of intimidation through leaflets, graffiti, armed attacks, and televised murders, which resulted in the resignation of some election officials.[86]

The first official January 2005 election results indicated that insurgent's "negative" campaign of intimidation was successful. These figures showed the highest voter turnouts were in Shi'ite and Kurdish areas, with 71% turnout in the ethnically and religiously mixed province of Babil, and an 89% voter turnout in the Kurdish province of

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82 Ahmed S. Hashim, "The Sunni Insurgency in Iraq," in *Middle East Institute Perspective* (15 August 2003), available from http://www.mideasti.org/articles/doc89.html; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

83 U.S. Department of State Office of Research, "Opinion Analysis, Security Worries Dampen Sunni Enthusiasm to Vote in Iraq Elections."

84 Ibid.

85 Ibid.

86 Aqeel Hussein and Colin Freeman, "Iraq's election officials resign fearing reprisals**,"** in *Telegraph News* (2 January 2005), available from http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/01/02/wirq02.xml&sSheet=/portal/2005/01/02/ixportal.html; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

Dohuk.[87] Diyala province, one of Iraq's predominantly Sunni central provinces, reported the lowest voter turnout, with only 34% of eligible voters making it to the polls.[88] No final turnout figures were released for the Sunni Arab provinces of Al-Anbar and Salah-al-Din provinces, two of Iraq's most violent provinces. Iraq's influential group of Sunni clerics, the Association of Muslim Scholars (AMS), called the January elections invalid due to this disparity.[89] Whether Sunni Arabs chose to stay home due to unwillingness to participate in the system, security concerns, or outright terrorization, the increased intimidation campaign prior to the election and its effects on Sunni voter turnout seems to show support for the negative approach of the Sunni insurgency.

The Sunni insurgents may have realized that coalition forces are unbeatable in a pitched battle, due to a preponderance of military hardware, organization, and technology at their disposal. This was demonstrated in Fallujah, when American military forces pushed through the insurgent's stronghold in a matter of days, killing over 1,000 fighters.[90] Thus, the insurgents have sought to wear down coalition forces through terrorism and partisan warfare, hoping to destroy the will of the coalition soldiers and the support of the American population at home. To this end, the insurgents have sought "to create a state of permanent political violence in the Sunni region, effectively pitting the new Iraqi transitional government, backed by the U.S.-led coalition, against the Sunnis in a sustained conflict."[91] They have done this by competing with coalition forces and the new government for control over political and military authority in the Sunni areas of central Iraq.

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87 Jamie Tarabay, "Figures Show Strong Iraqi Voter Turnout," in *MyWay News* (11 February 2005), available from http://apnews.myway.com/article/20050211/D886HE780.html; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

88 Ibid.

89 Lawrence Smallman, "AMS Critical of Iraqi Elections," in *al-Jazeera World News* (30 January 2005), available from http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/F1149ACC-43EE-4BA6-AD8A-AC9D62290514.htm; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

90 Pamela Hess, "US Tracks Enemy Dead but Keeps Mum," *The Washington Times* (16 November 2004), available from http://washingtontimes.com/upi-breaking/20041116-053602-2484r.htm; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

91 Jeffery White, Todd Orenstein, and Max Sicherman, "Resistance Strategy in the Trans-Election Period (Part I): Concepts, Operations, and Capabilities," in *Policy Watch*, (Washington D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy Publications, 24 January 2005), available from http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2238; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

A variety of strategies have been employed by the insurgents, targeting infrastructure, Iraqi "collaborators" and coalition forces. Infrastructure has been a common target. By depriving Iraq's citizens of social services, the insurgents aim to show the government is ineffective, illegitimate, and in this way "impoverish the Iraqi people and capitalize on a sense of frustration."[92] The insurgents have also tried to subvert the government by preventing Iraqis from working within the new system and with coalition authorities. This has occurred through intimidation campaigns, kidnappings, and the murder of Iraqis participating, employed, or affiliated with the coalition. ISF personnel working with coalition military units have been targeted in numerous attacks, assassinations, and bombings against ISF personnel and facilities. In addition to security personnel, political figures working with the coalition and within the new government have also been targeted.

Other than the tactic of killing civilians, insurgents have also sought to drive a wedge between coalition military units and civilians by creating the conditions where coalition planners need to take stringent measures in order to insure security. While this was apparently tolerated during the January elections, continued coalition counterinsurgency measures, which make life difficult for Iraqi citizens, can demonstrate the coalition to be oppressors rather than protectors, in the insurgents' view.[93] By undermining all other forms of authority, the Sunni insurgents have defined their strategy around the notion that "resistance is the only legitimate means of political expression" in a country run by foreigners and traitors.[94]

The ostensibly destructive and "negative" approach of the Sunni insurgency appears to be focused on subverting factors which could stabilize or add legitimacy to the coalition or the new Iraqi government. Despite this, the Sunni insurgents may indeed have long-term goals, attempting to consolidate their territory to allow self-policing. This

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92 James Glanz, "Saboteurs May Be Aiming at Electrical and Water Sites as Summer Nears," in *The New York Times* (9 June 2004), available from http://www.nytimes.com/2004/06/09/international/middleeast/09POWE.html; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

93 Bruce Hoffman, "Plan of Attack" in *Atlantic Monthly* (July/August 2004), available from http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2004/07/hoffman.htm; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

94 Jeffery White, Todd Orenstein, and Max Sicherman, "Resistance Strategy in the Trans-Election Period (Part I): Concepts, Operations, and Capabilities."

could be behind what appears to be a negative campaign to thwart the advent of a democratic government. Armed attacks, bombings, and intimidation campaigns may be part of this, in an effort to homogenize their territory, or in the case of tribal insurgents, their immediate locale. Through territorial homogenization, insurgents would be able to create a "niche" in the new Iraq, providing them with more of an opportunity for autonomy from the government and protection from its anticipated Shi'ite dominated politic.

D. FORMER RÉGIME LOYALISTS / BA'ATHITS

Anticipating military defeat, Hussein had begun drawing up plans for a partisan insurgency prior to the coalition invasion of Iraq.[95] Saddam Hussein's relatives, tribal relations, senior government officials, and *fedayeen* (Men of Sacrifice or paramilitary guerillas) forces were at the core of this plan, pledging their lives to Hussein and his service. Immediately following the capture of Baghdad, FRLs were among the first insurgents to begin resisting coalition forces. Well supplied with arms and ammunition from existing Iraqi military stockpiles, these insurgents also had the advantage of an instantly available chain of command taken from the vestiges of the Ba'athist regime.

By mid-2003, multiple groups of Hussein supporters had arisen, such as the General Command of the Armed Forces, Patriotic Front, and Iraqi Liberation Front.[96] Most of these groups were composed of former Ba'ath party members, Special Republican Guard units, former *mukhabarat* (state security) personnel, Iraqi intelligence personnel, and Hussein's *fedayeen* paramilitary personnel.[97] Their initial goals seemed to revolve around the creation of an environment so hostile that coalition forces would need to withdraw from Iraq. This would afford the country's former leadership the opportunity to seize power again, and subdue Iraq's domestic turmoil through force. Slowly, this goal became increasingly unrealistic, as Iraq's senior Ba'ath party members and government officials comprising the "deck of cards" were captured or killed through

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95 Ahmed S. Hashim, "The Sunni Insurgency in Iraq."

96 Jihad Unspun, "An Insiders Look at the Iraqi Resistance" (May 2004), available from www.jihadunspun.com; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

97 Faleh A. Jaber, "The Worldly Roots of Religiosity in Post Saddam Iraq," in *Middle East Report*, No. 227 (Summer 2003), 18.

coalition operations. The capture of Saddam Hussein on 13 December 2003 was a logistical and psychological blow to this group, and many of the FRLs' immediate goals came to an end. With this, FRLs started to realize that too many of the Ba'ath party's leaders had been captured or eliminated to successfully reinstall a Ba'athist regime in the short-term. FRL insurgents began leaving this sub-group for Sunni nationalist, Islamist, or other insurgent groups.[98] The loss in leadership and personnel caused a shift in the priorities of the FRLs, focusing on utilizing other insurgent groups to create widespread civil disorder in Iraq, in an attempt to drive out coalition forces.

While the Sunni FRL insurgency is now operationally defunct due to leadership and supporter losses, FRL elements remain active and have congregated in a Sunni insurgent group known as Al-Awdah (The Return). This insurgent group consists mainly of former Iraqi intelligence personnel, who have focused their activities on logistically supporting and funding other insurgent groups.[99] Although not actively engaged in insurgent operations, financing has allowed Iraq's remaining Ba'athists and FRLs a role, using the manpower of other insurgent groups for legwork.

E. IRAQI NATIONALISTS

Despite the fact that many of this sub-category, the Iraqi nationalist groups, oppose the return to power of the Ba'athists, they area natural evolution of FRL insurgents following the capture of the Ba'ath party senior leadership. With a limited set of options, many FRL insurgents lost their allegiance to the Ba'athist regime following the capture of Saddam Hussein, and began seeking other resistance groups to join. The progression from FRL allegiances to nationalist ones is intuitive, as Iraqi nationalist groups encompass not only insurgents using religious idioms but secular ones as well. The primary difference between Iraqi nationalist insurgents and the other sub-categories lies in group loyalties and goals. Whereas tribal groups have loyalties dedicated to the tribe and Islamists are dedicated to a specific reading of Islam, Iraqi nationalists are motivated by patriotism, their allegiance to the state, and a desire to insure Arab, Sunni

98 Samir Haddad and Mazin Ghazi, "Who Kills Hostages in Iraq: an Inventory of Iraqi Resistance Groups."

99 Ibid.

dominance in the new government. Unlike the last remaining Ba'athists, Arab Sunni nationalist insurgent groups are not intent on reviving the Old Guard, and they are operationally active, carrying out a wide range of attacks primarily in central Iraq.

The past two years of intense coalition counter insurgency operations have allowed for a merging of Iraqi insurgent groups. Whereas the first few months after the fall of the Ba'athist regime were marked by the rise of dozens of insurgent groups, the past year has seen a congregation of these individual insurgent organizations into loosely aligned partnerships. The National Front for the Liberation of Iraq (NFLI) and the Iraqi National Islamic Resistance (the 1920 Revolution Brigades), are two of these coalitions. These coalitions have brought together a variety of differing smaller insurgents groups, which may have had, and even retained tribal, ethnic, or Islamic ideas, but are focused on Iraqi nationalism for the benefit of Arab Sunnis.

F. TRIBAL INSURGENTS

The Sunni tribal groups may be the most numerous and active insurgent groups. Due to their small size and multiple nature, these groups have been some of the most difficult for coalition forces to understand and target in the post war insurgency. Tribal insurgent groups may take the shape of organized fighters under the leadership of a tribal sheikh or a neighborhood militia protecting a specific locale from outsiders. While many of the Sunni tribes benefited from Hussein's rule, others did not, creating rifts among tribal insurgents. Tribal insurgents also have a variety of ideological beliefs. Some are more secular or nationalist, others tied to Islamist ideals, receiving guidance from Sunni clerics. Despite these differences, tribal insurgent groups all share two distinct characteristics: they are highly localized and their primary allegiance is to the tribe.

Although most tribal insurgents have a nationalist or Islamist flavor, their main loyalties lie first with their tribe. Heavily concentrated in Al-Anbar, Diyala, and Salah-al-Din provinces, tribal insurgents maintain strong power bases in Tikrit, Fallujah, and Ramadi.[100] Tribes are tied to their local territory, and because of this, are sensitive to geographical boundaries. These boundaries may divide agricultural land, desert, or even cities, leading to neighborhoods with specific tribal characteristics. Therefore, tribal

[100] Sharon Otterman, "Iraq: Quelling the Insurgency."

based insurgents are suspicious of outsiders and respond not only to coalition military incursion, but anyone newcomers to their locale. This notion of difference is at the core of tribal xenophobia, producing different standards of virtue and tolerance that can produce a altruism within the tribe but "mean spirited partiality" directed against those perceived to be "different."[101]

Loss of status and power after the fall of Saddam Hussein has had a great deal to do with general tribal animosity toward coalition forces. Tribal honor and a general unwillingness to submit to any form of outside control is another motivation, unique to the tribal insurgents. Other motivations exist, and although Sunni tribal insurgents have no desire to see a Shi'ite-dominated government in power, their immediate operational moves are reactionary based on local factors. The two major influences on tribal operations seem to be the coalition presence in Iraq and tribal perceptions of their power relative to neighboring or rival tribes. Tribal responses have taken the shape of IEDs and armed attacks, directed at coalition units, government officials, ISF personnel, or any "outsiders" cooperating with the coalition such as international groups or NGOs.

Another complicating factor unique to tribal insurgents is the significance of inter-tribal conflicts. While tribal insurgents may be fighting coalition units and any outsiders who come into their locales, they are also concerned about their relative power in relation to neighboring tribes. Long-standing feuds among tribes have become part of the violence, pitting tribes against each other. Tribal favoritism under Saddam Hussein is at the center of this, as some benefited and other uncooperative tribes were persecuted.[102] Tribes that profited from Hussein's regime were largely concentrated in central Iraq, and included the "Jubbur in Sharqat, the 'Ubayd in al-'Alam and Tarmiya, the Mushahadah in Tarmiya, the Luhayb in Sharqat, and the al-'Azza in Balad."[103] Other tribes located farther north, such as the "Harb in ad-Dur, the Tayy in Mosul, the Khazraj from south of Mosul, and the Maghamis from Khalis," also benefited from Hussein's rule.[104] Saddam

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101 David Ronfeldt, "Social Studies: 21st Century Tribes," in *Rand Commentary*, (Rand Corporation Publications, 12 December 2004), available from www.rand.org/commentary/121204LAT.html; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

102 Amatzia Baram, "The Iraqi Tribes and the Post-Saddam System."

103 Ibid.

104 Ibid.

Hussein is from the Albu Nasir tribe, one of a collection of Arab Sunni tribes called al-Takarita, the common name for tribes from Tikrit and those who have married into this tribal structure.[105] Despite the fact that these tribes were the recipients of substantial support from the Iraqi government during the last decade, there are divisions in and among tribes. Members of the Albu Nimbr tribe from al-Ramadi were harshly repressed in August of 1995 due to protests, and members of the collective Hadithiyyin tribe maintain personal grudges against the Hussein regime and collaborators for the execution of high-ranking general officers from their tribe.[106] Understanding and exploiting these divisions would be a useful tool for American policy makers attempting to create a more effective tribal counterinsurgency strategy.

The coalition created its own problems due to its misunderstanding of tribes and method for establishing the ISF and local police forces in central Iraq. Security forces were created when coalition planners asked local notables and sheikhs for a given number of individuals for training.[107] The result of this was the creation of ISF units whose members came exclusively from a single Sunni Arab tribe. Because of this, many of Iraq's ISF units in central Iraq have been largely ineffective, as tribal security personnel refrain from not only detaining their tribal kin, but members of other tribes due to fear of creating a tribal conflict.[108] In the event that tribes do conflict, they possess weapons, ammunition and training to fight one another thanks to the coalition security forces. There has been evidence that this has already happened, as coalition forces have found marked shell casings from ammunition given to ISF units at the site of ambushed ISF personnel.[109] Whether the ammunition was given to the insurgents, stolen, or used by some ISF members against others, this represents a serious disconnect between coalition forces, ISF, and the goals that they are ostensibly trying to accomplish.

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105 Kerim Balci, "Excessive Power Blindness in Iraq," in *Zaman* online (26 January 2005), available from http://www.zaman.com/?bl=columnists&alt=&trh=20050126&hn=15938; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

106 Amatzia Baram, "The Iraqi Tribes and the Post-Saddam System."

107 Col Jerry Durrant USMC.

108 Ibid.

109 Ibid.

G. INDIGENOUS SUNNI ISLAMIST REVIVAL

One of the most noteworthy trends among the Arab Sunnis is the rise of a Sunni Islamist phenomenon increasing in popularity since the beginning of the insurgency. This section examines the rise of indigenous Islamism in Iraq prior to and after the fall of the Ba'athists as distinctly from notions of holy war supported by Iraq's transnational groups. This section also shows Iraq's growing Islamic movement to be a unifying factor among the Sunni insurgent groups, and delineates its beliefs, origins, and the reasons for its recent renewal.

Although Iraqi Islamism rose greatly with the insurgency, its roots are deeper. The Iraqi Muslim Brotherhood was founded in 1948 under the name of the Society for the Salvation of Palestine, and the Brotherhood formally established its branch in Iraq by 1951.[110] The organization espoused its beliefs in a democratic government which ruled by *sharia* or religious law, equality for all religions, and economic socialism which allowed women the right to work.[111] By 1968 however, and the rise of the Ba'ath party, Sunni Islamists were crushed alongside Shi'ite Islamists. For almost thirty years, Sunni Islamists were forced to meet and work in secret, limited by a repressive state apparatus. In 1991, following the first Gulf War and economic recession, Saddam Hussein changed the Ba'ath party's position regarding the Islamists in an attempt to bolster his domestic political support and legitimacy. In addition the tribes, Hussein courted the Sunni Islamists by building mosques, opening Sunni Islamic schools, appointing Islamic scholars to parliament, and closing nightclubs.[112] By 2003, Hussein's regime had helped foster a new type of indigenous Islamism, which blended with notions of nationalism.

The rise of Iraqi Islamism was greatly spurred by the beginning of the insurgency and the end of many FRL groups. "The decline of the importance and fortunes of the former regime insurgents allowed for the rise to prominence of an Islamo-nationalist element within the insurgency which is made up of former military personnel and which has received its motivation and encouragement from the preaching of the Sunni

110 Graham E. Fuller, "Islamist Politics in Iraq After Saddam Hussein," in *USIP Special Report* (Washington D.C.: United States Institute for Peace, August 2003), 8.

111 Ibid., 9.

112 Ibid., 10.

clergy."[113] In essence, the failure of certain insurgent groups has created a fusion of others, and Sunni clerics within central Iraq have been able to capitalize on this by reviving notions of Islamism. This revival has acted as social glue giving Iraqi Sunni nationalists, Ba'athists, and a variety of others common ground on which they can cooperate, despite their "deep ideological antipathies."[114] Although some Iraqi Islamist insurgent groups exist, the unifying ability of the Islamic revival is what makes this factor critical to understanding the Sunni insurgency. Because of this, the lines and distinctions between Sunni insurgent groups have become increasingly blurred, bringing together tribal, nationalist, and even criminal elements under this unifying umbrella.

While Iraqi Islamic revivalists have a variety of opinions on the strictness of Islam and the role that it should play in the government, they all hold Islam and the establishment of a Sunni-oriented Islamic government to be their central goal. The main difference between the Iraqi Islamists and the jihadists is the formers' indigenous nature. Transnational jihadists derive their ideological tenants elsewhere, whereas Iraqi Islamism has been largely home grown and therefore unique. In addition, most streams of Iraqi Islamism are more liberal than the transnational imported strains of Islamism, allowing for more compromise between insurgent groups and giving Iraq's Islamists a wider appeal than more extreme Sunni beliefs have found. Despite this, there has been intermingling between imported Islamic fundamentalists and Iraqis, enabling the rise of puritanical *salafism* within post war Iraq.

H. SUNNI INSURGENT GROUP RELATIONS

While Sunni FRLs, nationalists, Islamists, and tribal insurgents are separate groups, there are linkages between these categories which stem from similar goals or politico-familial ties. These categorizations are by no means static, as the mixed motives of many insurgent groups create fluid boundaries between insurgent categories. There have also been indications that Iraq's Sunni insurgent groups have cooperated with transnational elements in the past, when they shared a common purpose or when faced with an overwhelming enemy.

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113 Ahmed S. Hashim, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq," 19.

114 Graham E. Fuller, "Islamist Politics in Iraq After Saddam Hussein," 12.

On 14 November 2003, just six months after the coalition invasion of Iraq, General John Abizaid, the head of US Central Command, said there "is some level of cooperation (between insurgents) that's taking place at very high levels, although I'm not sure I'd say there's a national-level resistance leadership."[115] Since that time, coordination between Sunni insurgent groups has been increased slightly, especially during large operations such as the siege of Fallujah, when insurgent groups had common goals and faced a large and concentrated enemy. Still, deep ideological rifts between insurgent groups undermines continuous, large-scale, and serious cooperation, which has indeed not yet occurred.[116]

Understanding intra and inter-group communication is a daunting task, as most of the insurgencies have realized the coalition's robust communications intercept capability. Many insurgent communiqués are passed either verbally or by written notes. While U.S. officials have accused insurgents of using internet resources to coordinate, plan, and share tactics, there is more evidence that insurgents have used the media to gather information and find out what other cells are doing in order to "produce the maximum political and media impact."[117]

I. SIGNIFICANCE

Iraq's central provinces remain the coalition's most difficult challenge as the Sunni Arab insurgents in this region continue on a daily basis. The most significant aspect of the Sunni insurgency is its diverse nature. While the variety of insurgent groups has proven to be a nightmare for coalition analysts, it has also been a blessing that has prevented effective long-term organized cooperation between insurgencies. Despite the fact that insurgent groups have been known to exchange intelligence, engage in cooperative training, and mount a few combined attacks, these episodes have been sporadic and typically planned on a case-by-case basis.[118] Deep differences between

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115 Global Security, "Iraqi Insurgency Groups."

116 Ahmed S. Hashim, "Iraq's Chaos: Why the Insurgency Won't Go Away," in *Boston Review* (November 2004), available from http://www.bostonreview.net/BR29.5/hashim.html; Internet; accessed 4 March 2005.

117 Anthony H. Cordesman, "The Developing Iraqi Insurgency: Status at End-2004."

118 Bruce Hoffman, "Plan of Attack."

group ideologies have prevented any long-term alliance. Indeed, the groups would most likely fight each other if they did not share a common enemy. Thus, the Sunni insurgencies are likely to remain divided, providing coalition forces with an opportunity.

The diverse nature of these insurgencies holds true for the command, communications, and control structure of these groups as well. While some insurgencies are tribal or local, and look to established senior tribal or local leadership for guidance, other groups are small, cellular, and have little in the way of a command structure. The extreme flexibility of these groups has left them without a clearly definable center of gravity for coalition forces to attack, frustrating operational planners who find themselves generally on the defensive. Understanding the differences between insurgent groups could be extremely useful to coalition planners, as not all Sunni insurgent groups have the same goals or makeup. This holds especially true for the tribal insurgents, where divisions exist not only between tribes, but within tribal houses as well. Leveraging these differences and exploiting animosities between groups could be a useful tool to coalition counterinsurgency planners.

Operationally, one of the most notable trends with regard to the Sunni insurgents has been their improvement in basic anti-coalition capabilities. Almost two years of ongoing fighting between the insurgents, coalition units, and ISF has resulted in a more seasoned group of insurgents, more proficient in their armed raids, group tactics, security, and IED construction.[119] In essence, Iraq's Sunni insurgency is not disappearing, rather its members are getting better at fighting.

The recent history of Iraq's Sunnis is also significant. The revitalization of Iraq's tribal structures and Islamists in order to bolster government legitimacy is central to both of these insurgent sub-categories. Understanding where Iraq's Arab Sunnis were before the war and their privileged position in society is helpful in understanding where they are now and their motivations for fighting. While coalition forces have lost a great deal of time and credibility among Iraq's Arab Sunnis, a recognition of this history can help to develop a more flexible counterinsurgency strategy, better suited to dealing with current adversaries in Iraq.

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[119] Anthony H. Cordesman, "The Developing Iraqi Insurgency: Status at End-2004."

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IV. THE TRANSNATIONALS: OVERVIEW AND CURRENT STATUS

Transnational actors are currently some of the most active insurgent groups in Iraq. Post-war disorder and lack of border control have allowed for the infiltration of transnational criminal elements and Islamic jihad-oriented groups who have chosen Iraq as the battleground for their causes. While the Sunni insurgents may be the most numerically dominant in Iraq, some transnational groups have received a great deal of media attention due to high profile attacks and the sheer brutality of many of their operations, such as televised beheadings. Despite this, there are other transnational groups that have been relatively ignored by the international press, such as criminal elements, which have been able to capitalize on Iraq's lack of internal security for profit.

When considering insurgent groups within Iraq, the transnationalists are by far the most diverse. In comparison with the Sunni and Shi'ite categories, this category holds the widest variety of different ethnic, religious, and nationally based groups. However, they all share the common similarity of having a greater interest in their specific group, organization, or political agenda, than in the future of the state of Iraq, and accomplish this through continuous interactions with support networks that transcend national boundaries. These support networks may be long established, as in the case of the Kurds, or they may be relatively new, as in the case of some of Iraq's jihad-oriented transnational insurgents.

In this chapter, I break down transnational elements into three categories; the transnational Islamic jihadists, transnational criminal elements, and Kurds. Due to the overwhelming preponderance of insurgency activity by the jihadists within this typology, a significant amount of this chapter will be directed at examining the precise motivations, origins, and goals of this group, as well as individual organizations such as al-Qaeda affiliates. Attention will also be paid to criminal elements, transnational and local, which have been able to take advantage of the environment of general lawlessness within Iraq, being frequently confused with insurgents. While the large Kurdish enclave in Northern

Iraq has been generally willing to work with coalition forces, the size and experience of pre-war Kurdish militia forces warrants consideration for the motivations and political goals of this community.

A. IRAQ'S POST-WAR POWER VACUUM

The collapse of the Iraqi government created a power vacuum that had once been filled by a repressive state security mechanism. The Iraqi government had used a variety of measures including intimidation and torture in order to keep the country's multitude of resistance groups and criminal elements in check. Strict internal controls were by no means limited to dealing with criminals, Islamic extremists, and rebellious Kurds. They were also used to manage Iraq's Shi'ite community as well as some anti-regime Sunni tribes. The sudden disappearance of these controls had a significant impact on the transnationals, allowing for the rise of new groups, free movement across borders, and the reassertion of interests by independent groups which had long been a part of Iraqi society. This section examines the repressive tools and arrangements which Saddam Hussein used to police Iraq internally and deal with the country's transnational groups. In this respect, a context is built for understanding group motivations, goals, and their current situation.

"Following its seizure of state control in 1968, the Ba'ath party progressively intensified internal political repression and consolidated the functioning of the intelligence services as an instrument of domestic pacification against a backdrop of armed internal revolts against the Iraqi state by Kurdish and Shi'a groups."[120] This consolidation resulted in a robust internal network of intelligence and security organizations, which relied heavily upon informants, agents, and operatives to "penetrate all layers of Iraqi society."[121] Internal security agencies maintained a long list of functions, including protection of the president, prevention of coup attempts, repression of domestic dissent, and protection from opposition external to Iraq.[122] Saddam Hussein

120 Human Rights Center, "Iraqi Voices, Attitudes Toward Transitional Justice and Social Reconstruction," (Berkeley: University of California Berkeley Publishers, May 2004), viii.

121 Ibid., viii.

122 Ibrahim al-Marashi, "Iraq's Security and Intelligence Network: A Guide and Analysis," in *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (September 2002).

was able to use these organizations to insulate himself and his regime from domestic and transnational threats for over 24 years.

The pervasiveness of Iraqi internal repression has only recently become transparent. Immediately following the cessation of major combat operations, the international organization Physicians for Human Rights conducted a population-based survey in southern Iraq and found that 47% of households surveyed reported at least one human rights abuse.[123] For the purpose of the survey, abuses were broadly defined as torture, killings, disappearances, forced conscription, gunshot wounds, kidnappings, ear amputation, landmine injury, sexual assault, and hostage taking at the hands of the government.[124] Intimidation and general terrorization of the Iraqi public was the most widespread and useful mechanism of Hussein's regime. The creation of this environment was not only the product of Iraq's internal security network, but citizens as well, who were encouraged to report on each other, and kept in a constant state of fear through arbitrary arrests, kidnappings, and killings.[125] This campaign was so systematic that between three and four million Iraqis comprising approximately 15% of the country's population fled Iraq as opposed to living under Hussein's Ba'athist regime.[126]

The notion of going to an Iraqi prison or detention center for questioning was a constant fear under Hussein's government. Political dissidents, opponents of the regime, and those labeled as criminals were brought to Iraqi prisons and held for indefinite periods of time without trial. Iraqi prisons were some of the worst in the world, where prisoners were routinely beaten, raped, and forced into long confinements, frequently in small steel boxes or cells that were too small to stand or lay down in.[127] Prisoners were often underfed to the point of malnutrition and starvation, receiving no medical treatment for their injuries.[128]

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[123] Susannah Sirkin, Deputy Director of Physicians for Human Rights, in "Human Rights Violations Under Saddam Hussein: Victims Speak Out," Prepared statement, speaking at a Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Relations, United States House of Representatives (20 November 2003).

[124] Ibid.

[125] Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom, "Saddam Hussein: Crimes and Human Rights Abuses" (London: Foreign and Commonwealth Office publication, November 2002), 4.

[126] Ibid., 4.

[127] Ibid., 10.

[128] Ibid., 10,11.

Torture was another common repression mechanism of the state. Detainees in Iraqi prisons or suspects brought in for questioning could expect a variety of different methods including, eye gouging, rape, electric shock, cigarette burns, fingernail pulling, beatings, suspension from their limbs, *falaqa* (beating on the soles of the feet), and piercing of the hands with an electric drill.[129] Detainees were also subjected to surgical amputations of various parts of their bodies, routinely preformed by Iraqi doctors who committed them unwillingly, "in an atmosphere of terror."[130] Family members were often tortured or executed in front of each other for added humiliation and intentional psychological effects.[131] Rape of female prisoners became government policy, and systematic enough that Iraqi detention centers employed "professional rapists" whose job description read "violation of women's honor."[132]

Kidnappings, disappearances, and executions were also part of Iraq's repressive state apparatus under Saddam Hussein. These executions were regularly carried out without trial, and relatives were often "prevented from burying the victims in accordance with Islamic practice, and have even been charged for the bullets used."[133] The nature of the kidnappings and executions was frequently random, adding to the general state of terror and uncertainty within the Iraqi populace. At Abu Gharayb prison in 1984 alone, approximately 4,000 "political prisoners" were executed.[134] Given this location's history, the emotionally charged response of many Iraqis and boost for the insurgency in the wake of the mistreatment of detainees while in U.S. custody should have come as no surprise to coalition policymakers. Many of those kidnapped or executed were buried in mass graves, and initial estimates completed in August of 2003 by a combined U.S. task

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129 Amnesty International, "Amnesty International Report 2001, Iraq," (Amnesty International Publications, 2001), available from www.amnesty.org; Internet; accessed 9 March 2005.

130 Susannah Sirkin, "Human Rights Violations Under Saddam Hussein: Victims Speak Out."

131 Honorable Deborah Pryce, Congressional Representative from Ohio, "Human Rights Violations Under Saddam Hussein: Victims Speak Out," transcribed statement, from a Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Relations, United States House of Representatives (20 November 2003).

132 Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom, "Saddam Hussein: Crimes and Human Rights Abuses," 8.

133 Ibid., 12.

134 Ibid., 12.

force revealed 81 mass grave sites with another possible 30 sites yet to be explored.[135] A later report by the Coalition Provisional Authority, inclusive of initial surveys, listed over 260 mass graves in Iraq.[136]

While the end of Saddam Hussein's regime signaled an end to state-sponsored abuse for most Iraqis, it also indicated an end to continuous surveillance by government security mechanisms and an end to these harsh punishments for transnational groups. A large social void opened where thousands of Iraqi military, intelligence, and security personnel had once worked to monitor and suppress unsanctioned activities within Iraq. Criminal gangs operating well outside of the purview of the Iraqi state were able to cross Iraq's long borders virtually unchecked. Transnational jihadists and fundamentalist groups which had been not been a part of Iraqi society also took advantage of this situation. Iraq's Kurdish resistance groups were able to move about and conduct operations with far less hindrance from state authority. The end result was the rise of multiple Iraqi transnational insurgent groups, which have frequently become confused with previously existing movements within Iraq, such as Kurdish groups, and transnational criminal elements.

B. THE KURDS

Accounting for approximately 15% of Iraq's population, the Kurds have been a historically repressed community.[137] Many of the same mechanisms which had been used to repress the Shi'ites were directed against Iraqi Kurds to prevent this enclave from posing a threat to the Ba'athist regime. In response to this persecution, Iraq's Kurds established several large resistance movements, with their own goals, political agendas, and paramilitary sections. These groups have played a significant role in Iraq's internal security situation over the past several decades, maintaining large and active militias. While Iraq's Kurdish community has, thus far, refrained from promoting any active insurgent groups and seems to be supportive of the Iraqi government and its moves

135 Major Alvin Schmidt, United States Marine Corps, in "Human Rights Violations Under Saddam Hussein: Victims Speak Out," transcribed statement, from a Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Relations, United States House of Representatives (20 November 2003).

136 Susannah Sirkin, "Human Rights Violations Under Saddam Hussein: Victims Speak Out."

137 Anthony H. Cordesman, "The Developing Iraqi Insurgency: Status at End-2004," 17.

toward democracy, these militias and their potential cannot be discounted. With the end of the recent Iraq war, the militias remained, and while their disarmament has begun, the historical repression of Iraq's Kurdish community must be considered, as well as the groups which arose to defend it.

Categorization of the Kurds as a transnational group is based on several different factors. The general dispersion of the Kurds across eastern Turkey, northern Iraq, and western Iran created long-standing pre-war connections and smuggling routes which still exist today. In addition to this, the Kurds have "demonstrated time and time again that they are interested in greater self government in the north, not leadership of a government in Baghdad."[138] While current realities within Iraq such as the presence of coalition forces, opportunity for democracy, and disarmament of Peshmerga (militia) forces have made the pursuit of an independent Kurdish State unlikely, the Kurds may attempt to form an independent unit within the new state of Iraq. Beyond a historical record of autonomous aspirations, the Kurds have actual experience with "self-rule, civil rights, and a transition to democracy," which was exercised largely in northern Iraq under the protection of the U.N. mandated no-fly-zone in the decade prior to the recent Iraq war.[139]

The Kurds are a distinct ethnic group with their own language in the rough area approximately 230,000 square miles in size. The fall of the Ottoman Empire following World War I saw the failure of the Kurds to achieve international recognition and secure their own state which they had been promised under the 1920 terms of the Treaty of Sevres. In the decades that followed, Iraqi nationalism prompted periods of "Arabization" where the government forcibly moved up to 250,000 non-Arabs (mostly Kurds), in order to strengthen a Sunni Arab hold on Iraq's most fertile and resource-rich lands.[140] Government policies directed at the Kurds intensified after the Iran-Iraq War, and between 1987 and 1988, Saddam Hussein ordered a series of eight military moves against the Kurds known as *anfal* (spoils of war) campaigns. These campaigns were in

138 Phebe Marr, "Iraq "The Day After:" Internal Dynamics in Post-Saddam Iraq," in The *Naval War College Review* (Winter 2003), available from http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0JIW/is_1_56/ai_98143819; Internet; accessed 6 March 2005.

139 Carole A. O'Leary, "The Kurds of Iraq: Recent History, Future Prospects," in *The Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (December 2002).

140 Nir Rosen, "In the Balance," *The New York Times Magazine* (20 February 2005), available from http://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/20/magazine/20ELECTION.html; Internet; accessed 10 March 2005.

retaliation for frequent Kurdish uprisings and overt Kurdish support for Iranian forces during the Iran-Iraq War. During this time, it is estimated that over 300,000 Kurds were killed and approximately 4,000 villages were destroyed.[141] In 1988, two separate events drew attention of the international community as Iraqi military units killed thousands of Kurds with poison gas in the village of Halabja during what is thought to be a retaliatory strike against Peshmerga forces, and in Iraq's Badinan mountain area where Kurdish refugees had been attempting to flee to Turkey.[142] The Kurds were harshly repressed once again after the first Gulf War, when Republican Guard units which had been spared from coalition attacks turned north and put down a Kurdish rebellion, razing villages and killing thousands more.

While ethnic tensions do exist in Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq, especially between Kurds, Assyrians, and Turkmen, it appears that these groups have set aside their differences in order to participate in Iraq's new political process. Nevertheless Kurdish paramilitary forces are some of Iraq's largest, most experienced, and most well armed. The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) led by Jalal Talibani and Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) led by Masoud Barazani are Iraq's two largest Kurdish paramilitary groups. They are frequently referred to as the Talibani and Barazani factions, as both groups are principally extension of these two large Kurdish tribes. These groups have frequently been at odds with each other, and over the course of the past several decades, intra-group fighting has been common. Combined, the KDP and PUK fielded an estimated 75,000 fighters at the end of the Iraq war, but recent overtures by the Iraqi government have moved these groups toward disarmament and integration into the new Iraqi army and ISF.[143]

Given the history of Iraq's government-sponsored repression of the Kurds, "it is imperative that any future structure of governance institutionalizes protections and guarantees for all of Iraq's communities, but most notably the Kurds who have been so

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141 Carole A. O'Leary, "The Kurds of Iraq: Recent History, Future Prospects."

142 Nir Rosen, "In the Balance."

143 Global Security, "Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP)," in Globalsecurity.org (22 August 2004), available from http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/kdp.htm; Internet; accessed 10 March 2005.

brutally victimized on the basis of cultural identity."[144] This legacy has given the Kurdish community a vested interest in guaranteeing a safe future for its population, and despite the current compliance of their paramilitary forces, this could change if the Kurds felt that they were not being properly represented or given a fair stake in the future of Iraq.

C. CRIMINAL ELEMENTS

Organized criminal elements are probably the least understood and least discussed facet of Iraq's post-war turmoil. They have been responsible for smuggling, bribery, the movement of people, armed attacks, kidnappings, assassinations, and intimidation campaigns. Because of this, criminal activity has become frequently confused with Iraq's insurgent groups. While local criminal elements are a factor, it is the transnational elements which maintain the connections, weapons, money and networks that pose the greatest threat to peace and stability within Iraq. Well-armed and informed by a myriad of insiders within Iraq's government and security services, these groups are primarily motivated by money, and frequently sell their services to the highest bidder, regardless of political or ideological orientation. Since the end of major combat operations, these organizations have evolved into large and well-organized criminal groups, with "ties to each other and resourceful outsiders."[145] This phenomenon has provided transnational criminal organizations operating within Iraq tremendous resources and capabilities both internal to and beyond the country's borders.

The result of the growing organized crime problem within Iraq has been an increasing crime rate, which has a daily impact on the quality of life of Iraqis. In a survey last year, Iraq's Center for Research and Strategic Studies found that 60% of Iraqis felt "not very safe" or "not safe at all" in their neighborhoods, and similar percentages reflected that they had "not very" much or "no" confidence in coalition

144 Carole A. O'Leary, "The Kurds of Iraq: Recent History, Future Prospects."

145 Michael Schwartz, "Is the Iraqi Interim Administration Cracking Down on Organized Crime?" (18 July 2004), available from www.zmag.org/content/print_article.cfm?itemID+5898&sectionID=1; Internet; accessed 10 March 2005.

forces to improve their security conditions.[146] A separate survey suggested that 59% of Iraqis designate security as their major concern, and 40% of those respondents had singled out street crime, as opposed to terrorism and political violence, as their main source of concern.[147] Iraq's lack of efficient internal security, and the coalition's general unwillingness to combat identified "criminal" activity has not helped this situation.[148] In another poll last year, 67% of Iraqis sampled felt that coalition forces did not try at all to prevent Iraqi citizens from being killed or wounded, and 18% of those surveyed felt that coalition forces "tried only a little" to protect Iraqis.[149] The soaring crime rate is also significant as it provides a challenge to coalition forces, eroding their legitimacy and building popular resentment for their preoccupation with coalition security and seeming lack of concern for the general welfare of Iraq's citizenry.[150]

Theft and smuggling have been some of transnational criminal organizations' largest enterprises, with networks stealing building materials, and destroying existing infrastructure to sell for profit. These smuggling networks are sophisticated, and many are a product of the Iraqi government's pre-war mechanisms to subvert sanctions by moving materials through neighboring countries.[151] In a November 2004 report, U.S. congressional investigators stated that Hussein's regime had made more than 21.3 billion dollars by circumventing U.N. mandated sanctions, seven billion of which came from subversion of the oil-for-food program, and over thirteen billion from other smuggling activities.[152] While some of the oil was smuggled out of Iraq's southern port of Umm

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146 Kenneth M. Pollack, Senior Fellow and Director of Research at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, "Securing Iraq," prepared testimony, presented to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (21 April 2004).

147 Ibid.

148 Michael Schwartz, "Is the Iraqi Interim Administration Cracking Down on Organized Crime?"

149 Brookings Institution, "Iraq Index, Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-Saddam Iraq" (The Brookings Institution publications, 23 February 2005), available from www.brookings.edu/iraqindex; Internet; accessed 10 March 2005.

150 Kenneth M. Pollack, "Securing Iraq."

151 United Nations Information Service, "Organized Crime to be a Growing Problem in Iraq," in *UNODC Fact-Finding Mission Report*, (Vienna: United Nations publications, 27 August 2003), available from www.unis.unvienna.org/unis/pressrels/2003/cp445.html; Internet; accessed 10 March 2005.

152 Global Policy Forum, "Volcker Highlights Smuggling Over Oil-for-Food in Iraq Inquiry," in *The New York Times* (28 December 2004), available from http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/sanction/iraq1/oilforfood/2004/1228smuggling.htm; Internet; accessed 5 March 2005.

Qasr, the majority of it was trucked overland to Jordan and pumped through the Kirkuk-Banian pipeline into Syria.[153] In addition, weapons, equipment, and spare parts were readily available through smuggling networks in Jordan and Syria. Prior to the war, Iraqi defectors validated this, specifying that Iraq received a variety of military equipment such as anti-aircraft missiles, rocket guidance systems, tank engines, and fighter aircraft parts via overland routes from Syria.[154] In order to make this transnational mechanism of financial and logistical connections work, Iraq's pre-war smuggling network was expansive, operating at all levels of the government and the commercial sector. After the war, the smuggling networks remained largely intact, maintaining their cross-border connections and benefiting from the wide variety of insurgent groups, which required logistical support. Although these activities may seem low-level in comparison with armed attacks, they do a great deal to undermine the credibility of the coalition and reconstruction efforts, and are symbolic of the lack of effective control that security forces and the coalition maintain over Iraq's internal security.

Kidnapping is another lucrative enterprise for insurgents, bringing them money, sending political messages, and in some cases, effecting policy. Senior figures within Iraq's Interior Ministry believe that insurgents have begun working with criminal organizations, "outsourcing" kidnappings to criminal groups, thereby allowing them to seize a specific demographic of captive when they have the opportunity and then sell the captive to the insurgent group.[155] It is believed that Jack Hensley and Eugene Armstrong, two American contractors seized from their Baghdad residence in September and beheaded by radical insurgents, were the targets of such an arrangement.[156] In other incidents, the kidnapping of a Filipino truck driver in July of 2004 and the threat of his execution prompted the Philippines to change national policy by withdrawing its small

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153 Middle East Media Research Institute, "Iraq Buys its Way Out of U.N. Sanctions," in *MEMRI Special Dispatch* (3 June 2002), available from http://www.memri.de/uebersetzungen_analysen/laender/persischer_golf/irak_boycott_03_06_02.pdf; Internet; accessed 5 March 2005.

154 Gary C. Gambill, "Syria Rearms Iraq," in *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, Vol. 4, No. 9 (September 2002), available from http://www.meib.org/articles/0209_s2.htm; Internet; accessed 5 March 2005.

155 Anne Barnard, "Lethal Alliance Fuels Kidnappings, Iraq's Militants, Criminals Team Up," in *The Boston Globe* (25 September 2004).

156 Ibid.

contingent of troops from Iraq in a highly publicized event, winning the insurgent kidnappers legitimacy. In January of 2005, the Governor of Iraq's Anbar Province, one of the most violent areas of the country, was forced to resign after his three sons were kidnapped by insurgents or criminal gangs. Beyond the economic motivations of criminal organizations involved in kidnappings, are the implications of this network for inter-insurgent group cooperation. With a great deal of money at stake, it is probable that kidnappings and the trade of captives could provide yet another link between insurgent groups with different motivations and ideological bases.

D. TRANSNATIONAL JIHADISTS

There have been a wide variety of transnational jihad groups that have taken part in the Iraqi insurgency, some larger than others. Because of their religious nature, transnational jihad groups have had a wide-ranging appeal, attracting fighters from all over the Muslim world. This has resulted in a multitude of groups, comprised of indigenous Iraqis and foreigners with financial and logistical lines, which reach well beyond Iraq's national borders. *Al Zawra*, an Iraqi newspaper, identified several of these groups last fall, including *Ansar al-Islam*, *Ansar al-Sunnah*, *Tawhid wal-Jihad*, the *Islamic Army in Iraq*, and various others.[157]

Despite this variety, these groups all share the common similarity of basing their resistance upon a specific radical interpretation of Islam. This reading of the religion goes beyond traditional orthodoxy by demanding a role for Islam in government, and more broadly speaking, labeling all of those who do not adhere to this interpretation of Islam as enemies, which must be subdued by using violence if necessary.[158] In a taped recording made public on 30 January 2005, Ayman Al Zawahiri, Osama bin-Laden's chief deputy, described the "three foundations" of Al Qaeda's ideology: a "Quran-based authority to govern," which condemns secularism and calls for an Islamic state under *sharia* law; "liberation of the homelands," which demands the expulsion of Americans and other foreigners from the Middle East, who have sought to control their energy

[157] Samir Haddad and Mazin Ghazi, "An Inventory of Iraqi Resistance Groups."

[158] Christopher M. Blanchard, "al-Qaeda: Statements and Evolving Ideology," in *Congressional Research Service Report for Congress* (4 February 2004), 6.

resources and manipulate a "pro-Israeli conspiracy in the region;" and the eventual "liberations of all human beings" who would overthrow their corrupt governments in favor of pure Islamic law and governance.[159]

There are multiple known linkages between Iraq's transnational jihadist groups and al-Qaeda, but the most telling evidence comes from direct statements made by insurgent leader Abu Mussab al-Zarqawi (born Fazel Inzal al-Khalayleh), and Osama bin-Laden. On 17 October 2004, Abu Mussab al-Zarqawi issued an online statement known as a *bay'ah* (oath of allegience), to Osama bin-Laden.[160] This statement was found to be authentic by U.S. intelligence analysts and was furthermore endorsed by bin-Laden and al-Zawahiri.[161] Given al-Zarqawi's media attention and successful operations at the time, the rationale behind this pledge is unclear. A variety of motivations have been proposed, but it is believed that coalition operations in Fallujah had degraded al-Zarqawi's base of support and he was forced to ask al-Qaeda for further assistance.[162] This theory is largely based on the supposition that "groups like al-Zarqawi's would prefer to retain their independence and autonomy to enhance their maneuverability and ability to attract recruits and funding."[163]

When considering specific transnational jihadist groups in the Iraqi insurgency, *Ansar al-Islam* (Supporters of Islam) has become prototypical. While this group is largely of Kurdish origin, its motivations classify it as a transnational jihadist group as opposed to a Kurdish insurgent group. *Ansar al-Islam* is believed to be the result of a merger between several northern Iraqi Islamist factions and *Jund al-Islam*, a radical Islamist group lead by Abu Abdallah al-Shafi'i.[164] *Ansar al-Islam* predates most of Iraq's other jihadist groups as it was established in August of 2001 in the remote

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159 Christopher M. Blanchard, "al-Qaeda: Statements and Evolving Ideology," 6.

160 "Zarqawi's Pledge of Allegiance to al-Qaeda," From *Mu'askar al-Batta, Issue 21*, translated by Jeffrey Pool, in *Terrorism Monitor*, the Jamestown Foundation, Vol. II, Issue 24 (16 December 2004), 4.

161 Ibid., 4.

162 Gordon Corera, "Unraveling Zarqawi's al-Qaeda Connection," in *Terrorism Monitor*, the Jamestown Foundation, Vol. II, Issue 24 (16 December 2004), 7.

163 Ibid., 7.

164 "Ansar al-Islam profile," in *Iraqi News*, available from http://www.iraqinews.com/org_ansar_al-islam.shtml; Internet; accessed 10 March 2005.

mountainous area between northern Iran and Iraq.[165] The group is believed to have been established with $300,000 to $600,000 in financing from al-Qaeda, and fell under the influence of Abu Mussab al-Zarqawi when he fled Jordan in December of 2001 and sought refuge with the group.[166] Upon its inception, *Ansar al-Islam* benefited greatly from the pre-existing connections that had been established by *Jund al-Islam* and other radical groups. In addition to personal connections, *Jund al-Islam* reportedly brought a large arsenal of weapons into Iraq, including Katyusha rockets, artillery shells, anti-tank and anti-air guns, sniper rifles, rocket propelled grenades, machine guns and mortars.[167]

In comparison with Iraq's other insurgent groups, foreign fighters make up only a small percentage of the total number of insurgents, numbering fewer than 1,000 in official U.S. government estimates.[168] The support networks for these fighters are believed to be largely external to Iraq, with these groups receiving weapons, funding, and personnel from not only neighboring countries, but individuals and organizations as well. The U.S. administration has gone to great lengths to prevent this support, accusing Iran and Syria of directly assisting Iraq's insurgents. While this is speculative, and "neither country could overtly support the insurgency, it is not too far-fetched to assume they did so covertly, or turned a blind eye to pro-insurgent activities within their respective countries."[169] The disappearance of border controls between Iraq and its neighbors after the war certainly did not help this situation, and as previously mentioned, it is likely that transnational criminal organizations and those pre-war networks established to subvert sanctions have made a lucrative business in helping many of Iraq's transnational insurgent groups receive support.

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165 Jonathan Schnazer, "Ansar Al-Islam: Iraq's Al-Qaeda Connection," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy (17 January 2003), available from www.frontpagemag.com/articles/printable.asp?ID=5571; Internet; accessed 10 March 2005.

166 Ibid.

167 Michael Rubin, "The Islamist Threat from Iraqi Kurdistan," in *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin* (December 2001), available from www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC06.php?CID=580; Internet; accessed 10 March 2005.

168 Brookings Institution, "Iraq Index, Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-Saddam Iraq."

169 Ahmed Hashim, "Foreign Involvement in the Iraqi Insurgency," in *Terrorism Monitor*, the Jamestown Foundation, Vol. II, Issue 16 (12 August 2004).

Regardless of their small numbers, transnational jihad groups such as *Ansar al-Islam* have been the center of media attention in Iraq due to their linkages with Al-Qaeda, large-scale attacks, and executions of captured foreign workers. *Ansar al-Islam* took credit for the UN headquarters and Jordanian Embassy bombings carried out in August of 2003. It is also believed that al-Zarqawi was personally responsible for the beheading of captured American Nicholas Berg in May of 2004, and his affiliated groups were responsible for ten similar subsequent executions.[170] These attacks have come to be part of what is thought to be al-Zarqawi's strategy in Iraq, aimed at "pressuring international actors to rescind their support for Iraq's American-led transition," deterring Iraqis from supporting the transition through attacks on Iraqi government and security personnel, obstructing reconstruction efforts through creating an environment of terror, and promoting a rift between Iraq's sectarian communities trough the indiscriminate killing of Shi'ites and attacks on Shi'ite holy sites.[171]

The media has become a critical part of transnational jihadists operations, providing them with feedback on their attacks, and allowing groups to disseminate their messages. In many respects, terrorism and the media have a mutually beneficial relationship, where jihadist activities provide media companies with "high profile, ratings-building events," and simultaneously allow jihadist groups instant access to a large audience.[172] Many of these events, such as videotaped executions, are designed by jihadists with a specified target audience in mind, attempting to influence foreign laborers, Iraqi citizens working with the coalition, or foreign troops.[173] Media coverage of armed attacks, bombings, and other tactical events is another dimension of this problem, providing groups with an instant assessment of the effectiveness of their operation. This provides coalition military members and Iraqi government officials with yet another set of hurdles, as insurgent groups, especially transnational jihadists, have

[170] Gary Gambill, "Abu Musab al-Zarqawi: A Biographical Sketch," in *Terrorism Monitor*, the Jamestown Foundation, Vol. II, Issue 24 (16 December 2004).

[171] Ibid.

[172] James E. Lukazewski, "The Media and the Terrorist: A Dance of Death," speech transcript, given at a Joint Meeting of the Airport Operators Council of America and the American Transport Association (June 1987), available from http://www.e911.com/speeches/mediaandterrorists.html; Internet; accessed 6 March 2005.

[173] Ibrahim al-Marashi, "Iraq's Hostage Crisis: Kidnappings, Mass Media, and the Iraqi Insurgency," in *The Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (December 2004).

been able to use the media for not only "bomb damage assessment," but to gauge the overall psychological impact of an attack or televised execution on their target audience.

Due to the multitude of different groups, complex financing, and likely crossover of fighters, it is difficult to disaggregate many of Iraq's individual jihadist groups. Some have speculated that many of Iraq's transnational jihadists groups are actually the same group of individuals, who have used multiple group names at different times to confuse the coalition and make their numbers seem greater than they truly are.[174] When considering specific group relations, *Ansar al-Islam* is believed to have close linkages with other radical Islamist insurgent groups in Iraq, such as *Ansar al-Sunnah* and *Tawhid wal-Jihad*. It is rumored that *Ansar al-Sunnah* is actually the evolution of *Ansar al-Islam*, which took place in late 2003 under the direction of Abu Abdallah al-Shafi'i.[175] The linkage between *Ansar al-Islam* and *Tawhid wal-Jihad* stems from the fact that *Tawhid wal-Jihad* was the name of al-Zarqawi's group established in late 2000 through direct cooperation with Osama bin-Laden.[176] While the founding of this group also predates the Iraq war by two and a half years, and its operations were largely aimed at overthrowing the Jordanian monarchy, it is believed that many of *Tawhid*'s connections and overland smuggling routes through Iran are still used in supporting Iraq's transnational jihadists.[177]

Prewar connections, which tie *Jund al-Islam* and *Ansar al-Islam* to the Iraqi government, have also been proposed and provide a potential current connection between insurgent groups. It is believed by some that Iraqi intelligence agents supplied *Ansar al-Islam* with money, weapons, and free reign to operate in northern Iraq, prior to the coalition invasion.[178] The motivation behind this move is thought to have come from a mutual dislike of Kurdish resistance groups, which *Ansar al-Islam* targeted based on their "relatively secular and democratic" tendencies.[179] The resulting campaign against

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174 Ibrahim al-Marashi, "Iraq's Hostage Crisis: Kidnappings, Mass Media, and the Iraqi Insurgency."

175 Ibid.

176 Gary Gambill, "Abu Musab al-Zarqawi: A Biographical Sketch."

177 Ibid.

178 Jonathan Schnazer, "Ansar Al-Islam: Iraq's Al-Qaeda Connection."

179 Michael Rubin, "The Islamist Threat from Iraqi Kurdistan."

Kurdish resistance groups began an internal war in northern Iraq, which first made international news in September of 2001 when 43 PUK fighters were killed and mutilated in an ambush by *Ansar al-Islam* fighters.[180] Until the invasion of Iraq, a variety of other attacks ensued, including bombings and targeted assassinations. Given their focus on Kurdish groups, it is possible that Saddam Hussein at least passively supported *Ansar al-Islam*, as his regime undoubtedly profited from these activities that kept Kurdish groups at bay in the north, as opposed to threatening the regime.[181] While little is known about the relationship between this jihadist group and other Sunni insurgent groups, one can speculate that prewar connections between Ba'athists and jihadists did not wholly disappear once the regime fell, providing yet another possibility for insurgent group cooperation and communication. Ideologically, associations between Ba'athists and Islamic fundamentalists run counter to the central secular tenants of Ba'athism. Realistically however, the potential pre-war connections between Ba'athists and jihadists, as well as pre-war transnational criminal and smuggling networks, provides a useful forum for group cooperation. As mentioned earlier, these connections were likely deepened by the capture of Saddam Hussein and many of the regime's former officials, as the ideological beliefs of Ba'athism became less important to many FRLs, making way for the realistic tactical and logistical difficulties of fighting the coalition.

Despite the possibility for transnational jihadist cooperation with other insurgent groups, it is likely that their extremist beliefs and methods will continue to set them apart from other insurgent groups, and make the prospect of long-term cooperation between these groups unlikely. Indications of this division were seen in the city of Fallujah during the summer of 2004, when insurgent groups were preparing for the coalition's assault on the city, and forced to operate in close quarters with each other. There are reports that tensions almost resulted in intra-group conflict between a transnational jihadist group and an Iraqi nationalist group during the summer of 2004, which was eventually settled by a handful of insurgent group leaders who convinced the jihadists to leave Fallujah's Jolan suburb.[182]

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180 Michael Rubin, "The Islamist Threat from Iraqi Kurdistan."

181 Jonathan Schnazer, "Ansar Al-Islam: Iraq's Al-Qaeda Connection."

182 Ahmed Hashim, "Foreign Involvement in the Iraqi Insurgency."

These tensions have ideological and doctrinal roots, and while many Sunni insurgents may admire the training, motivation, and skills which the jihadists possess, many mainstream Islamists and tribal fighters "resent (their) ideological agenda which has resulted in the killing of Iraqis, simply for not adhering to a strict religious line."[183] Jihadists have justified these killings of Iraqi Muslims "by branding (them) as *kafirs* (unbelievers) for aiding in the reconstruction of Iraq, under infidel occupation."[184] Despite this justification, there remains a deep rift between jihadists and other Sunni insurgents. Other insurgent groups have found fault with Zarqawi's methods, realistically citing the fact that his brutal tactics have detracted from international sympathy for their plight.[185] This complaint was especially valid in the case of Nicholas Berg, who was executed following the Abu Gharayb scandal, bringing broad international criticism and shifting media attention from the prison to the insurgency. Iraq's influential Sunni clerical organization, the Association of Muslim Scholars, has also repeatedly condemned the al-Zarqawi network for beheading foreigners, stating that this violates Islamic law, further showing divisions, even among Islamists.[186]

E. SIGNIFICANCE

Iraq's diverse transnational groups present coalition policymakers with an array of options and challenges. The multitude of dissimilar groups certainly poses a difficult task for coalition analysts and forces, but it is also representative of the sheer differences between groups. While cooperation between insurgent groups does exist, tension between many Sunni insurgent groups and transnational jihadists bodes well for the coalition. Properly addressed by Iraqi government and coalition policy, these clear divisions amongst groups may be exploitable.

Beyond this, the significance of transnational crime and its effect on Iraq's citizenry is also of critical importance to coalition legitimacy in Iraq. Currently, Iraqi fears seem to be far more focused on crime such as kidnapping, murder, and assault, than

183 Ahmed Hashim, "Foreign Involvement in the Iraqi Insurgency."

184 Ibrahim al-Marashi, "Iraq's Hostage Crisis: Kidnappings, Mass Media, and the Iraqi Insurgency."

185 Gary Gambill, "Abu Musab al-Zarqawi: A Biographical Sketch."

186 Ibid.

on insurgent-driven violence. Iraqi beliefs that coalition forces are more concerned with force protection and hunting down active insurgents are validated every time coalition forces pursue insurgent forces instead of protecting Iraqi citizens. The lack of attention by coalition forces to criminal problems will only marginalize coalition forces even further, as well as their efforts in reconstruction.

In Iraq's post-war environment, criminal elements seem to have flourished, and their continued consolidation and organization is worrisome. The economically-driven nature of transnational insurgents also makes them an ally of any group which can pay for their services, presenting another difficult problem for coalition forces. Specifically, the "kidnapping for hire" scheme being employed by transnational criminal groups is a symptom of this evolution and will likely provide coalition forces and Iraqi security personnel with a difficult alliance to combat in the future. Because of Iraq's ongoing insurgent activities, whether criminally driven or not, NGO's, reconstruction efforts, and investors have remained limited in high-crime areas of Iraq. This scenario is proving to be a vicious cycle, as reconstruction efforts and an improved quality of life will likely increase coalition legitimacy and work to stem insurgent activities.

In many ways, comparisons can be drawn with the fifteen year-long Lebanese civil war, during which time reconstruction efforts were severely hampered by ongoing violence, corruption, and crime. After several years, the Lebanese situation became a war without a victor, where many of the participants benefited from the conflict because of external support, money, and other incentives. Criminal activity was rife and became mixed thoroughly with militia and faction activity. The potential evolution of Iraq's security environment into a similar situation, especially in the central provinces, is a possibility that coalition planners should not discount.

While coalition forces need not resort to the inhumane measures used by Saddam Hussein, they may need to rethink their counterinsurgency strategy within Iraq, and concentrate more on providing security for the Iraqi people over other priorities.

V. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The basis of any insurgency is clearly the population from which it rises. While U.S. strategists have identified this in theory by stating that we must win the "hearts and minds" of the Iraqi people, the root of Iraq's insurgency has not been addressed in practice. Coalition policy remains targeted on "killing active insurgents rather than identifying and rectifying the structural problems that spawned them."[187] These structural problems arise from the myriad of historical, political, and social factors previously examined, and have produced a wide variety of insurgent groups.

Faced with ongoing daily violence and the prospect of a long-term counterinsurgency campaign within Iraq, coalition military planners need a better understanding of Iraq's diverse insurgency and new ideas on how to handle this problem. By breaking the insurgency down into Shi'ite, Sunni, and transnational categories, I have demonstrated that the Iraqi insurgency can be disaggregated into groups with their own specific goals, historical motivations, and tendencies. Differences amongst insurgent groups within categories have also been discussed, highlighting the fact that the Iraqi insurgency is far from monolithic, but rather a variety of concurrent movements, often at odds with each other. In this way, I reiterate the necessity for disaggregating the Iraqi insurgency into typologies, and the importance of a better understanding of the motivations, origins, and goals of insurgent groups within each typology. Based on this understanding, policy makers are better equipped to fabricate a flexible counterinsurgency strategy that will account for differences not only between categories, but within them as well.

With respect to insurgent typologies, I have shown the Shi'ites to be a unique category of insurgents, motivated by their own distinct set of goals. These goals are largely rooted in history, and their status as a repressed majority has had a tremendous impact on the rise, motivations, and ideology of the Shi'ite insurgents. While this insurgency was principally composed of the Mahdi Army, I have shown this group to

[187] Steven Metz, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq," in *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Published by The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Winter 2003-2004), 32.

represent only a small number of Iraqis, as the interests of the Shi'ite community are far from homogenous. Iraqi Shi'ites have a wide range of opinions with regard to the political, and social future of Iraq and its Shi'ite community. This diversity is not a new phenomenon and is even present within Iraq's Shi'ite *ulama*. Understanding the historical factors behind the rise of the Shi'ite insurgency, as well as the divisions within this community are crucial in not only working with Iraqi Shi'ites, but preventing the rise of another Shi'ite insurgency.

Iraqi Sunni insurgents are another distinct category. I have demonstrated that this community's privileged status during Saddam Hussein's rule, and loss of status after the coalition invasion, is just one motivating factor underpinning Iraq's Sunni insurgency. I also clearly divided this typology into subcategories, namely FRLs, nationalists, tribal insurgents, and indigenous Sunni Islamists. While many of the Ba'athists have been captured, killed, or shifted to different groups, this group of FRLs remains a potential financier of other insurgents. Iraqi nationalists remain one of the largest subcategories of insurgents, motivated by their desire to expel foreign forces and prevent power from falling into the hands of the Shi'ites. Traditional power structures and tribal networks have also played a large part amongst Sunni insurgents, and this aspect of the insurgency remains one of the coalition's most challenging hurdles in their efforts towards stability. And finally, the revival of indigenous Sunni Islamism has functioned as a cohesive element between insurgent groups, helping to bring together insurgents, especially during times of increased coalition pressure.

The power vacuum resulting from the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime was the impetus behind the rise of the final category of insurgents, the transnationals. The repressive state security mechanism of the old government was replaced by an environment of lawlessness in which insurgents have flourished. I have shown that the transnationals can be divided into three different subcategories, Kurds, jihadists, and criminal elements. While the Kurds have not sponsored an active insurgent group, their large and well-equipped Peshmerga forces are Iraq's largest militias, and therefore, the motivations and goals of this community must be considered in coalition interaction with this community. Transnational jihadists have been some of Iraq's most active groups, receiving a great deal of attention for their high profile and graphic attacks.

Transnational criminal groups, who have capitalized on pre-war smuggling networks, have been some of the Iraq's most overlooked insurgents. Groups within this sub-category have been responsible for many of Iraq's kidnappings, and the highly organized, financially motivated nature of these insurgents has made them the willing accomplice of any group within Iraq that can afford their services. Despite this, coalition forces still benefit from the sheer number of varied groups within Iraq, as the high degree of diversity amongst insurgent groups has, thus far, undermined their long-term cooperation and coordination.

A. COUNTERINSURGENCY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this section is to propose a general set of counterinsurgency policy-oriented recommendations aimed at more effectively addressing many of the root causes of the insurgency. These recommendations are derived from a more profound understanding of Iraq's disaggregated insurgency, and the various tendencies of the individual groups within.

1. Concentrate on Crime

Possibly one of the greatest challenges to achieving long-term stability stems from the pervasive nature of crime and transnational criminal elements which have hampered reconstruction efforts, given aid to insurgent groups, and contributed to the general atmosphere of lawlessness in Iraq. Post-war conditions, neglect, and corruption have already contributed to the growing problem of organized crime. The embryonic Iraqi police forces have been either too overwhelmed with insurgent attacks or too heavily infiltrated with collaborators in order to effectively deal with the growth in crime. Thus far, U.S. policy makers have directed the coalition's counterinsurgency strategy on insurgent fighters, such as Sunni nationalist, jihadi, or Sunni tribal groups.[188] Little attention has been paid to the growing criminal threat, which provides many of these groups the logistical support and assistance that they need to survive. Iraqi citizens see this, and the perceived lack of consideration for their safety and security works against coalition credibility. As previously mentioned, organized crime-sponsored kidnappings have evolved into a business within Iraq, providing insurgent groups and criminal

[188] Steven Metz, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq," 34.

elements with a mutually beneficial arrangement that can be likened to South American insurgencies, such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC). The unchecked nature of crime in Iraq has become a problem that can no longer be ignored, and "should this continue at such a rapid rate, bringing it under control will take decades."[189]

Identifying and targeting transnational criminal elements is critical to a more effective counterinsurgency strategy. Ongoing crime and violence takes a daily toll on coalition credibility and legitimacy. Iraqi citizens who fall victim to a bombing, shooting, or kidnapping are less likely to care about the political or economic motivations behind the crime than the actual crime itself. The primary message remains that the new Iraqi government and the coalition lack the strength to protect the average Iraqi citizen. In this respect, U.S. policymakers need to reorient their counterinsurgency strategy, taking crime more seriously and implementing measures which undercut the criminal base in Iraq, thus severing its relationship with insurgent groups.

Tougher anti-crime policies should be implemented at the local level, with an emphasis on stronger and more effective local police forces which can provide the environment of security that Iraqi reconstruction efforts and civilians need. While the use of coalition or foreign forces to police crime in Iraqi cities is impractical due to barriers of credibility, language, and cultural knowledge, there are many things that coalition forces can do in order to assist Iraqis in this task. More thorough vetting of government employees, oversight, increased financing, and increased training are just a few areas where coalition forces can assist without directly engaging in policing actions. Specifically, Iraqi forces need to become better at fighting criminal and insurgent forces. Whereas American soldiers winning a major victory over insurgents or cracking down on crime does little for Iraqi perceptions on the credibility and strength of the new government, ISF and police victories go much further in building a positive perception. "The key to success is not for the U.S. military to become better at counterinsurgency,

189 Steven Metz, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq," 34.

but for the U.S. military (and other elements of the government) to be skilled at helping local security and intelligence forces become effective at it."[190]

Increased border patrols, surveillance, and focused intelligence resources are other areas that the coalition could help with. Iraq's poorly regulated borders are especially of concern, as the new border guard is severely limited in its ability to police the lengthy, open borders.[191] Coalition troops could certainly facilitate these operations, limiting the transnational flow of illicit goods and persons that help feed the insurgency. The creation of a secure environment in Iraq will continue to be an elusive goal until Iraqi and coalition forces are able to sever many of the transnational links which provide Iraqi insurgents with logistical aid and services.

2. Re-Empower Iraq's Sunni Arab Sheikhs

Understanding the history of Iraq's Sunni Arabs and their preferential treatment under Saddam Hussein's regime is crucial to grasping their current sense of frustration and fears with regard to their uncertain future. Previous power structures and networks were disenfranchised after the coalition invasion, leaving many Sunni Arabs with the notion that they had few alternatives other than resistance. Saddam Hussein realized the value of these structures, and was able to use them to legitimize his regime when he most needed the political support. Sunni Arab fears of political alienation and social penetration by the new Iraqi government are at the center of this, especially among tribally-oriented Sunnis.

Coalition policymakers and Iraqi officials should consider plans to re-empower tribal sheiks, and make conciliatory moves towards giving Sunni tribal areas specific allowances that would contribute to their sense of autonomy and self-protection. While this would not completely solve the Sunni insurgency, it would help to assuage the fears of many Sunni Arabs and help to defuse conspiratorial rhetoric. Offers could include giving tribal areas some room to administer tribal law, while still guaranteeing basic human rights under Iraqi national law. The notion of "deputizing" tribal sheikhs or families to oversee reconstruction projects in their locale could be another method of

190 Steven Metz and Raymond Millen, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response," Strategic Studies Institute (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute publications, November 2004), 20.

191 Ahmed S. Hashim, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq," 49.

winning local support and helping to insure the security of infrastructure.[192] Incentives such as contracts, equipment, and investment opportunities could accompany these deals, and help to further bolster local support.

Currently, Iraqi government officials and coalition policymakers are faced with stubborn resistance groups in central Iraq that seem to believe that they have few alternatives other than insurgency. Giving these groups a stake in the future of Iraq by utilizing existing power structures, the prospect of authority, and economic development could help end the insurgent activity in central Iraq. In the long-term, coalition and "outsider" forces in Sunni tribal areas will continue to be perceived as enemies, and cooperation with Iraq's tribal networks may be our only solution for lasting peace in these areas.

3. Capitalize on Existing Intra-Group Tensions

The highly decentralized and diverse nature of the Iraqi insurgency is another factor, which coalition policymakers can use to their advantage. Fractured relationships between and within insurgent typologies provide U.S. and Iraqi officials with opportunities to exploit these differences and capitalize on many already existing tensions. The near-violent incidents between local insurgents and transnational insurgents prior to the Fallujah campaign are an excellent example of this rift. Tensions between Sunni tribal groups can also be used in the same way, as many of Iraq's tribes and families maintain long-standing animosities which predate the coalition invasion. Strategists and intelligence collection assets need to take advantage of these points of contention, using them as leverage to recruit sources, gather information, and exploit the weaknesses of insurgent groups at odds with each other.

4. Be Willing to Negotiate

Since the onset of the insurgency, coalition officials have been consistently reluctant to negotiate with any insurgent groups. While some insurgent groups, such as transnational jihadists, do not have ties to or a stake in the future of Iraq, other insurgent groups do. This realization should have effects on coalition counterinsurgency strategy, and make the prospect of negotiating with certain insurgent groups far more agreeable to coalition and Iraqi government officials. Understanding which groups hold a stake in the

[192] Kenneth M. Pollack, "Securing Iraq," 9.

future of Iraq should also have an impact on coalition tactics, as the killing of local tribal insurgents will likely have community-oriented effects that the killing of transnational jihadists or criminal elements may not. It is in this respect that coalition policy makers should be more willing to negotiate with groups such as Sunni tribal or nationalist insurgents, noting the fact that these are indigenously Iraqi groups, which have roots and a future in Iraq. It is with regard to these groups that coalition counterinsurgency strategy should be the most population-focused, addressing the structural and historical causes of the insurgency within the Sunni Arab population, rather than hunting insurgents. With a substantial population base, these groups of insurgents will be able to replenish their numbers, serving only to deepen long-term animosities between this population and coalition forces without resolving the conflict.

Coalition policymakers also must work to instill this willingness within Iraq's ethnic and religious communities. "The United States must make it clear to Iraqi community leaders that it is their responsibility to reach compromise with responsible leaders of other ethnic or sectarian communities because the United States cannot remain in Iraq indefinitely, nor can it adjudicate Iraqi factional disputes indefinitely."[193] This will be perhaps one of the most difficult tasks in post-war Iraq, as highly emotional tensions exist between many of these communities, underscoring mutual mistrust and resentments. Regardless, social groups and politicians do not necessarily need to trust each other in order to effectively work within a government, but they do need to trust the system. Perhaps this is a more attainable goal on which coalition officials can focus their efforts in hopes of building a stable Iraq.

5. Continue to Work with Cooperative Parties

Finally, it is essential that coalition officials recognize the efforts made by Kurdish and Shi'ite community leaders who have worked with the coalition and urged patience and restraint in the face of insurgent violence. Sunni Arab and transnational insurgents continue to target these two communities with assassinations and bombings in an attempt to provoke retaliation, and prompt large-scale inter-communal violence. Shi'ite mosques and gatherings have been particularly targeted, leaving dozens of

[193] W. Andrew Terrill, "Strategic Implications of Intercommunal Warfare in Iraq," Strategic Studies Institute (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute publications, February 2005), 39.

civilians killed and wounded since the end of the January 2005 elections. Thus far, Shi'ite and Kurdish community leaders such as Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, and Jalal Talabani have advocated cooperation with the coalition, and pressed for their communities to work within Iraq's new government. Much of this complicity has been based on the hope that the Shi'ites and the Kurds will have a better future in a democratic Iraq than they have had in the past. While this cooperation is promising, coalition policymakers should continue to respect the contributions of these community leaders, maintaining open channels for communication, taking their concerns seriously, and refraining from taking this cooperation for granted. Both of these communities have the potential to support large and homogenous insurgencies, and without their willing support, political, economic, and social reconstruction efforts in Iraq would be fruitless.

B. CONCLUSION

After nearly two years of counterinsurgency efforts in Iraq, the insurgency shows no conclusive signs of going away. While the January 2005 elections and wide participation by Shi'ites and Kurds was hailed as a victory by many, transnational criminal, jihadist, and Sunni groups have become more skilled in their tactics and operational art. Iraq's poorly guarded borders, pervasive and growing criminal threats, and the unifying potential of Islamic fundamentalism pose significant threats to prospects of peace and stability. Defeating the Iraqi insurgency will likely be a massive undertaking, which will take years to accomplish. This will be a task that will require the dedication of not only Iraqi, and American forces, but the support of the international community as well. By now it is clear that there is no easy solution to this complex and multi-faceted problem, but there are things that policymakers can do in order to help. Recognition of the diverse nature of the Iraqi insurgency, and the challenges as well as the advantages that this poses to the coalition's counterinsurgency strategy is only the first step in addressing Iraq's problems. Solving the insurgency is a process, and hopefully coalition and Iraqi policymakers will reorient Iraq's counterinsurgency strategy toward a more flexible plan which will not only account for group differences but, provide Iraq with the long-term stability that it desperately needs.

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